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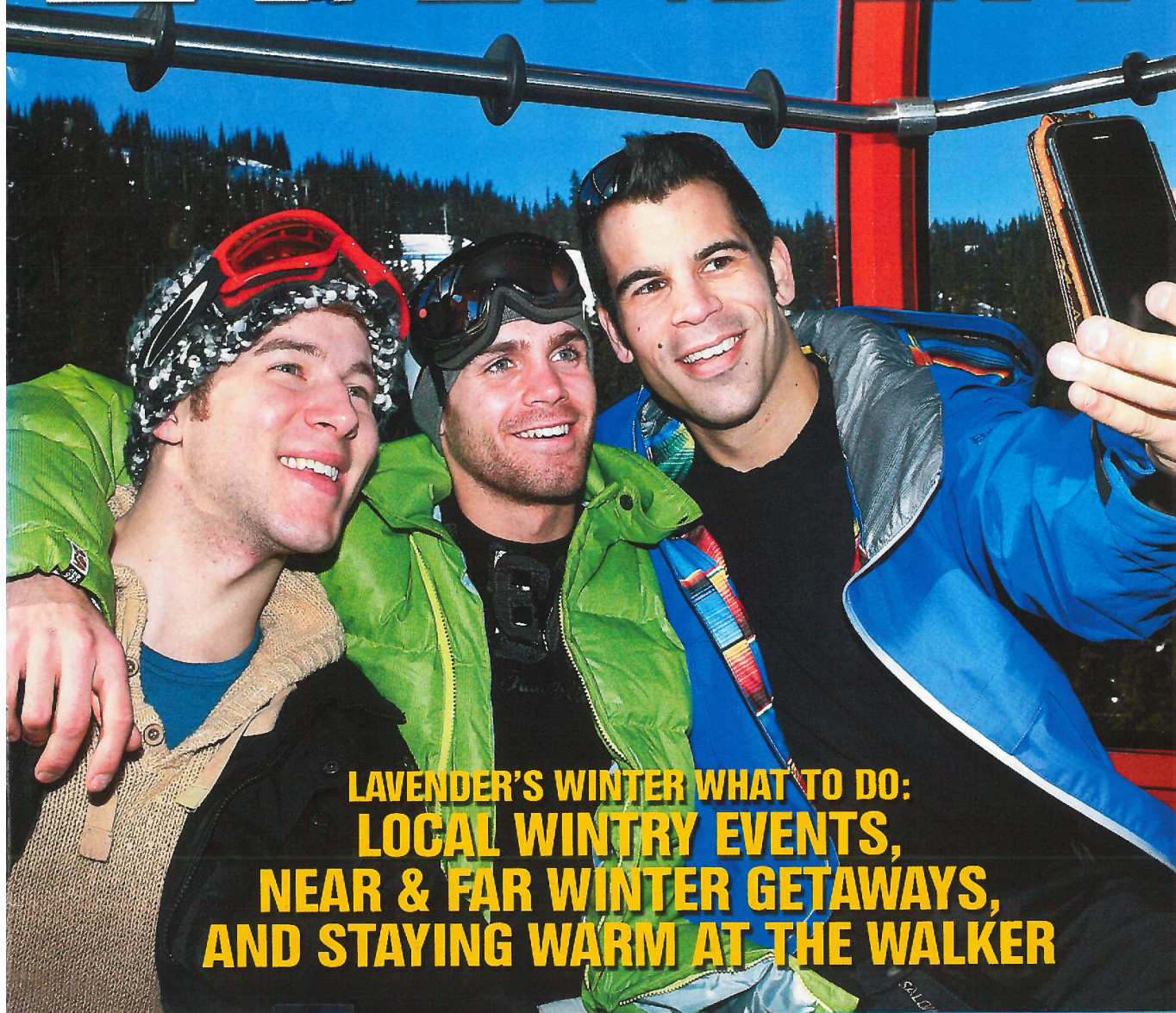
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JANUARY 10-23, 2013 | ISSUE 460

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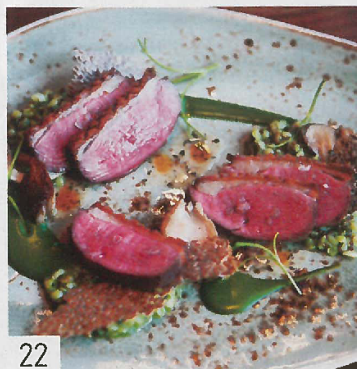
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Skiers riding the Peak2Peak Gondola between Blackcomb and Whistler Mountains during WinterPRIDE. Photo by GayWhistler.com/TJ Ngan

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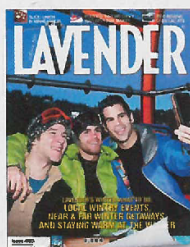


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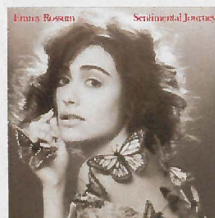


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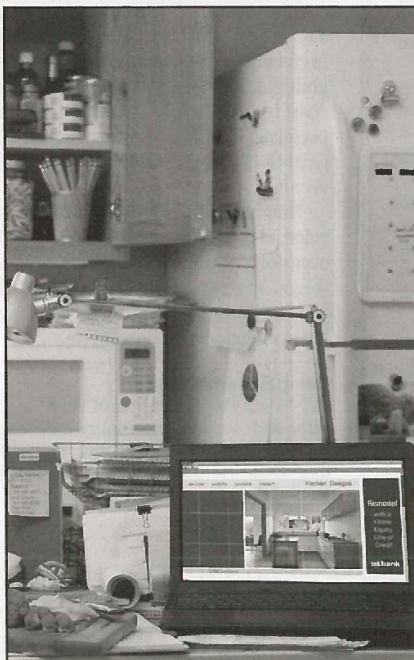
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## FROM THE EDITOR | Andy Lien

**HAPPY NEW YEAR.** The last time I wrote, I talked about the cognitive dissonance of balancing the victory of defeating the marriage amendment last November just to have the issue of same-sex marriage be dropped by legislators. We're in a holding pattern until leadership takes the reigns and I really hope that'll have happened by the time this hits the stands a week from today. When this hits the stands, it'll be the day after the start of the 2013 legislative session at the Capitol. By God, I hope we'll have rallied.

We're good at rallies. They usually run a bit long, we're so good at them. We're passionate about this issue of attaining the freedom to marry. Our speeches laud previous civil rights leaders and activists and we quote them; we say that this issue is no different. Marriage is a freedom that this community has the right to as citizens of this country. This community is an established and recognized group of people that has been defended as a minority, as well as a group of people that will not be discriminated against in the workplace, in academic institutions, in matters where being separate and independent people are concerned.

Now, in matters where joining together as a unit are concerned, this community needs consistent recognition as a group that should not be discriminated against. It needs to be reiterated that to join together with someone as a family unit is seen as an asset in our society. Resources are shared, security is boosted, health is improved, and happiness is arguably more widespread. If these statements weren't true, marriage would not be something to attain, rights and privileges would not be attached to marriage, and marriage would be a non-issue for most people as it would not be as desirable, or even as necessary. Therefore, same-sex couples who would seek to join marriage would improve our society as being more supported and legal in the sharing of resources, security, health, and happiness.

And this is a good thing for us as a society.

This good thing—this positivity—is what needs to be shared in this next leg of attaining the freedom to marry. It's both more nuanced and encompassing than this simple version, of course. It would involve children that already exist in families that already exist headed by same-sex couples that already exist. It would include couples that don't yet exist that would be comprised of people who have not yet come out. It would mean that same-sex couples, once legally married, would have to go through more hoops and legal proceedings to no longer be together as it would require divorce. It would mean that language would become easier as marriage will be marriage whether in passing on the street or

passing on in inheritance.

During the VOTE NO campaign, we shared our stories. We had conversations as to why marriage matters to us. We talked about rights. We pleaded our cases. We persuaded. We came out. We cried. We overwhelmingly made the point that to limit marriage to be between a man and a woman in the Minnesota Constitution was unacceptable. We need to continue these conversations.

What I've been grappling with and listening to in the time since the election is this issue about what the state voting down the marriage amendment meant. As people talk, I hear them say that to assume that the state is ready for same-sex marriage is to misinterpret the election results...that defeating the amendment does not equate to wanting to extend the freedom to marry to include same-sex couples.

This is true. The one does not mean the other.

But, we don't need to underestimate Minnesota, either. We don't have to assume if the legislators legalize same-sex marriage right away that the backlash will be substantial or long-lasting. Extending the freedom to marry to same-sex couples will benefit all of us as a state, as a nation. It is a movement that will happen, and it can happen now. We are ready enough...the people who aren't may never really be, until they're forced to be for the greater good of society.

And, I can guarantee you, as far as the future of Civil Rights in the United States of America is concerned, to not move progressively on the issue of extending the freedom to marry to same-sex couples will have far more negative of a backlash than people who are upset by it. To be worried about the ripple effect of one action to make things right with a minority in the United States of America versus the inaction that fortifies discrimination is short-sighted and un-American.

So, with this, I charge you with challenging others in those conversations that include statements like "the state isn't ready for same-sex marriage" or "the state has other priorities." Ask them what is there to be ready for? Stop letting people frame same-sex marriage as something that is negative. Reclaim the conversations we started having last year and express to them the positive aspects of extending the freedom to marry to same-sex couples. And, if you're feeling particularly engaging, ask them when would be right and when should civil rights be a priority, because if they can't give specific dates, I'd maintain the answer is always NOW.

Keep rallying.

With thanks,

Andy □

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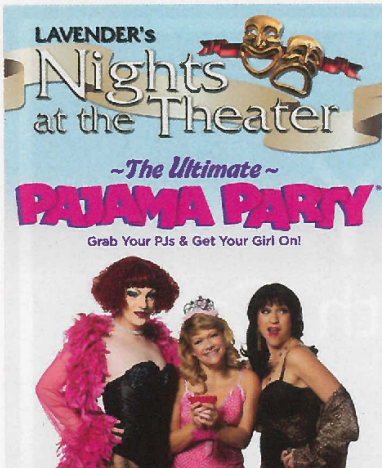
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Guns: Who should own them, what kinds can be owned, and what—if any—controls there should be on them is a hot-button topic. And after the recent, unimaginable massacre in Newtown, Connecticut (I grew up in Hartford), the debate over firearms control will grow only more heated and more polarized, if not addressed.

When it was reported the shooter's mom, Nancy Lanza, collected guns, one Facebook pundit psychologized, "Maybe she liked her guns better than him..." a thoughtless remark, accusing and inflaming without offering any substantive suggestion. Then a former baby-

sitter reported that Lanza warned him never to turn his back on her son, ever. The boy was nine at the time. So no one knows what Lanza went through raising that child. No one knows how her son obtained the guns. And no knowledge or speculation will bring back the twenty-six lives savagely ended that Friday morning.

Guns, mental health services; those issues remain. And will proliferate if every attempt to initiate change goes directly to meltdown. Should every quirky, moody, distanced child be stigmatized? Should every privately owned gun be confiscated? More effective gun control needn't pathologize every firearms owner.

No civilian needs an assault rifle. There. I said it. But neither does every gunowner need to relinquish his weapon(s). Yes, I used the word "weapon." Guns are weapons by nature, even when used for sport and recreation. Another Facebook summed it up: "Wanting sensible gun laws doesn't make me anti-gun."

Each of these opinions will be unpopular, but some change needs to be considered and implemented before the next Newtown. The painful odds are there will be one. □

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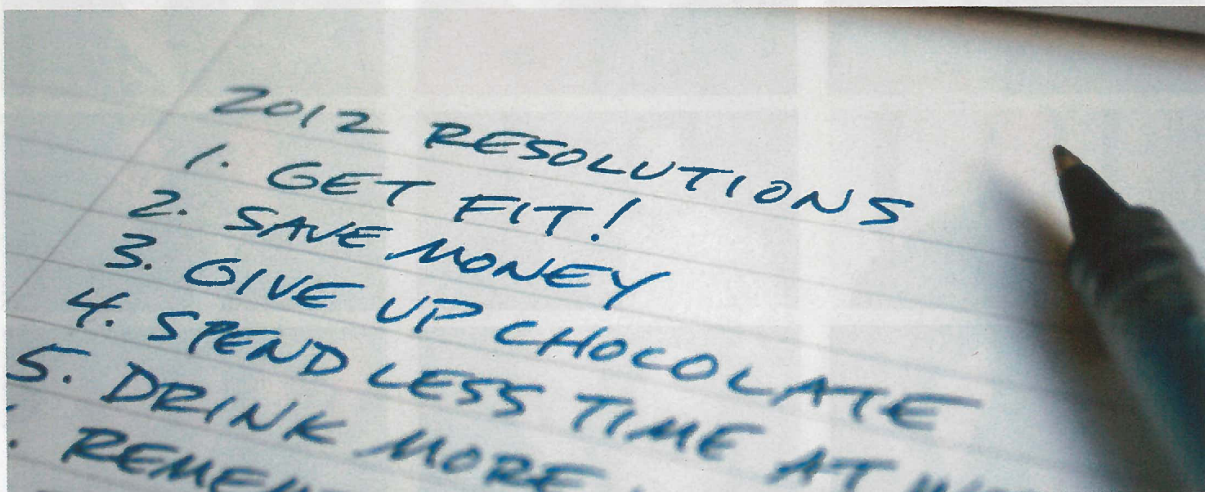


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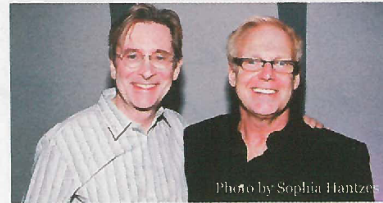


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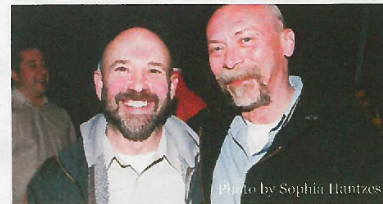


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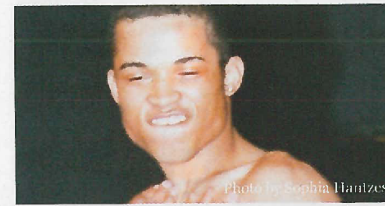


Photo by Sophia Hantzes



Continued from page 8

## MOVIE BEAR SNOW TUBING EVENT

Saturday, January 19, brings the Seventh Annual Movie Bear Snow Tubing Event. Pre-tubing dinner will be at the Oak Park Heights Ruby Tuesday's 5-7 PM at 13375 60th Street N, Oak Park Heights.

Tubers will gather at Green Acres Recreation, 8989 55th Street N., Lake Elmo at the lower Chalet, from 7:30 - 10:30 PM; tubing from 8-10. Membership and Events Chairman Rick Perry advises, "Bring heavy winter gloves that you can grab a rope with; Insulated boots, (not tennis shoes); and wear layers of warm clothes, tucked in to keep snow out.

Participants must print out and sign a waiver. For more details on this and costs, check out the Movie Bears Facebook page.

## ONE VOICE MIXED CHORUS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

One Voice Presents 25th Anniversary Concert Celebrating a quarter century, One Voice Mixed Chorus (OVMC) kicks off 2013 with its We Are One Voice 25th Anniversary Concert, January 26.

"Twenty five years ago, the world was still a lonely and unsafe place for GLBTQ people," notes new Executive Director Carol Bauer, and hatred, discrimination and violence were still widespread in 1988. "This is the genius of One Voice. Through inspired songs and personal storytelling in our communities and our schools, One Voice is transforming hearts and minds and making the world a better place—not only for GLBTQ people, but for all people. Together, we are changing the world—one voice at a time."

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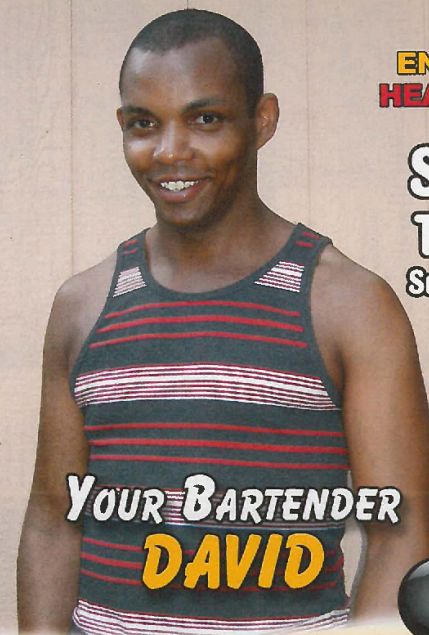
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BAR SHOWCASE | photos by George Holdgrafer

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**PONY TRASH*****Pony Trash***

No sooner do I file my favorites for 2012 that I discover a whole pocket of recent local works that deserve some love. Pony Trash's debut five-song ep certainly deserves a spot on my top 10 list. While this the first time out for the band, the four musicians are no strangers to the local scene, playing for the likes of Polica, Gospel Gossip, STNNG and the Chambermaids. While there are touches of these various acts, Pony Trash definitely has its own sound, with vast drenching waves of feedback over a groove that brings to mind the spare, moody sound of early 1970s Neil Young. The tracks here are only a taste, but opener "Submarine" is one of my favorite tracks of the year.

**VARIOUS ARTISTS*****The Minnesota Beatle Project Vol. 4***

It says a lot about the depth of the Beatles catalogue that we are four volumes and there still hasn't been a repeated song and there are still plenty of A-list tracks to choose. (To be fair, with a few exceptions, the Beatles library doesn't really drop below the B+ level.) The 13 artists here work to put as much of their own stamp on each tune. It's a hard dance, but acts like Chastity Brown ("For No One"), Trampled by Turtles ("Baby's in Black") and Mark Joseph (a terrific "Baby You're a Rich Man") do it extremely well. Astronautalis goes one step further, bringing a punk-rock stomp to "Back in the U.S.S.R." that makes it sound like a lost Stooges track.

**BNLX*****LP***

Ed and Ashley Ackerson are no strangers to the local music scene (Ed used to feed my music addiction at the Groove Monster in Dinkytown back in the dark days of college) and while LP is their full-length debut, the duo has issued seven eps under the name. That means BNLX comes out of the gate with plenty of confidence. They also know how to put together great, driving rock 'n' roll that takes cues from a myriad of styles that bring to mind everything from 1960s psychedelic to the poppier side of the Jesus and Mary Chain to the male/female vocals of X. For the full-length, the pair is joined by drummer David Jarnstrom, who provides a stronger backbeat than the drum machine used on the earlier eps.

**PRISSY CLERKS*****Bruise or Be Bruised***

Born out of the breakup of Total Babe when Clara Saylor's main bandmate left to concentrate on Howler, the Prissy Clerks join a long list of noisy, but poppy Twin Cities bands that goes back decades. The mix of Saylor's sweet delivery and the fuzzed-out guitars is particularly beguiling, as are the short, sharp songs that make up the band's debut. That doesn't mean the band can't slow down a bit, such as on "Losing Time," but even that still has a nice, heavy wall of fuzz behind it. A lot of that comes from the rest of the band, including Howard Hamilton, Dylan Ritchie and accordionist Emily Lazear. It's a great listen for lovers of garage rock, strong vocals and youthful exuberance.



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AIDA. Photo by George Byron Griffiths

**AIDA**

Through Jan. 22  
 Pantages Theatre, 710 Hennepin Av., Mpls.  
 (800) 982-2787  
[www.hennepintheatretrust.org](http://www.hennepintheatretrust.org)

Austene Van recently impressed audiences in a major supporting role in the wildly acclaimed *In The Next Room (or The Vibrator Play)* at the Jungle. But now she's playing the lead in the Tony-winning *AIDA* which launches Theater Latté Da's 'Broadway Re-Imagined' partnership with Hennepin Theatre Trust. Van, who plays the prisoner of war title role, sees the Elton John/Tim Rice musical in terms of "the subjugation of an entire culture of people when an oppressive culture, perhaps out of the instinct to survive, is more than comfortable allowing ignorance and hatred to take the reins and overrun compassion and humanity – driving the urge to keep the other culture under foot to feel uplifted and valid as human beings."

Van adds: "In the play, both cultures seem to have no problem with women assuming control and leadership. However, I notice the way the two cultures in the play accept how a woman is defined, perceived, how she functions, behaves, and how she is able to walk through the world authentically or not, are two very different ideas."

**INTRIGUE WITH FAYE**

Jan. 25 – Feb. 9  
 Nimbus Theatre, 1517 Central Av. NE, Mpls.  
 (612) 277-1188  
[www.tctwentypercent.org](http://www.tctwentypercent.org)

Playwright Kate Robin is being produced again by 20% Percent Theatre Company Twin Cities, a theatre committed to female

playwrights. *Intrigue With Faye* is part of an expanding body of plays dealing with electronic and digital experience. Facebook, iPhones, and Twitter, etc. help lead to automatic documentation of our personal activities beyond anything dreamed of a generation ago. That can be argued as positive, negative, or somewhere in-between. But, whatever you think, if we don't see the pitfalls, such technology can wreck lives and that's why this production is important. There are unprecedented legitimate concerns nowadays regarding privacy rights. For example, Senator Franken's Location-Privacy Bill that would close mobile-tracking loopholes speaks to certain concerns which have-up to this point-been neglected by Congress.

Director Nicole Wilder says that Robin compels us to consider "what does it mean to be in a committed relationship? Essentially, opening up to another human being, and hoping they are opening up

in the same way, leaves a person vulnerable to being hurt. What are the tactics we use to minimize the potential for hurt? How might such tactics actually hurt us in the long run? Add in the fact that, in this digital world of ours, near constant surveillance is not only possible, it's probable, and you have a recipe for some seriously complicated and unhealthy interactions. For this reason, I believe the relationship problems that are brought to light in this production should be examined by every couple."

**JOHNNY BASEBALL**

Jan. 18 – Feb. 10  
 Park Square Theatre, 20 W. 7th Pl., St. Paul  
 (651) 291-7005  
[www.parksquaretheatre.org](http://www.parksquaretheatre.org)

You've probably heard about the 'Curse' which is felt by some to have caused the Boston Red Sox to never win the World Series between 1918 to 2004. This 2010 musical written by Richard Dresser will appeal to those who are and who are



## SPOTLIGHT



Johnny Baseball. Photo by Kyle Smith

not sports fans with its interplay of the Babe Ruth myth, superstition, interracial love, and various music traditions.

Music Director Denise Prosek points out that Johnny "is set in two distinct eras, 1919 and 2004. The music vacillates from the style of jazz night clubs to the contemporary Broadway sound. The historical perspective of the piece allows the characters to sing 'good old boy' tunes about the camaraderie of baseball players to choral booster songs much like Yale and Harvard's *a cappella* glee clubs, while embracing the beginnings of jazz through the leading lady, Daisy (Timotha Lanae), a kind-hearted, strong woman intent on finding her fame as a singer. The music in the 2004 story line captures the modern style of musical theater or updates older music forms, such as the tango. Robert and Willie Reale (composer and lyricist) have created a score that ultimately finds the nuance through all their musical choices and yet still threads their own voice through the entire piece."

### PRISCILLA, QUEEN OF THE DESERT

Through Jan. 13  
Orpheum Theatre, 910 Hennepin Av., Mpls.  
(800) 859-SHOW  
[www.hennepintheatretrust.org](http://www.hennepintheatretrust.org)

Handsome Bryan West plays the lead role of Adam/Felicia in the premiere of the national tour of the smash drag film turned Broadway musical sensation. He sent a comment our way: "First of all, being an out gay actor in general, even on Broadway, is a big step for anyone to take. The same prejudices exist in New York as do in Los Angeles. Will he or she be able to play straight? Will they appeal to a young audience, etc.? It is also very liberating and helps a lot with bringing down barriers while learning a character and not feeling like you're hiding anything. Now with *Priscilla*, it's definitely in your face. Not much hiding going on, but when you talk to a couple from Alabama, whom you saw dancing in the aisles and see how they related

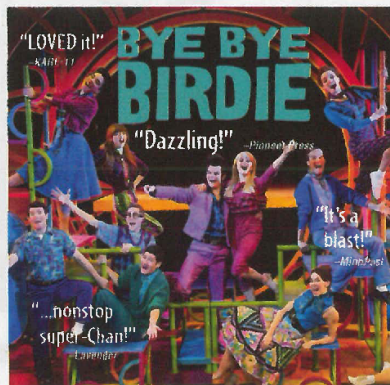
to the show just as much as the drag queen next to them, you know you're doing something right!"

### A SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS

Through Jan. 20  
Guthrie Theater, 818 So. 2nd St., Mpls.  
(612) 377-2224  
[www.guthrietheater.org](http://www.guthrietheater.org)

Even though it runs about 20 minutes too long, these Yale Repertory guest artists at the Guthrie put on one of the funniest shows of recent years. You'll also see some locals in the midst of the madness: Sarah Agnew in a fun crossgender turn, Steve Epp in top kintetic form, and Randy Reyes in whimsical support. This contemporary adaptation of Italian icon Carlo Goldoni's classic 18th century comedy borrows liberally from references as varied as 'fiscal cliff' and Mary Tyler Moore. It combines Italy's historic *commedia dell'arte* acting style that brings to mind the image of a harlequin, with today's overwrought stand-up comedy cult. But in this case, it's not overwrought. Director Christopher Bayes has made it work hilariously in service of the show's madcap cascades of mismatched interactions between the stock characters.

Epp, who was a core lead actor at the legendary Theatre de la Jeune Lune, plays servant Truffaldino who commits himself to two masters who are in the same town at the same time. He's a dazzling powerhouse of slapstick comic timing and rapid delivery. He leads Bayes's entire ensemble, a group that will make your head spin with its quick, impeccable delivery and stylish presentation. This show is comedy magic of the first order. □



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# UNION

The signs of life were there before anyone knew what was coming. The hulking space that once housed Shinders was undergoing a massive transformation. Soon, whispers began to spread until it was finally confirmed that Kaskaid Hospitality, which also runs the Crave empire, would own this ambitious new venture. It would be known as UNION. The retractable roof came into shape, offering a new way to dine, year-round, under the stars. Mouths gaped at the specs; the entire operation looked ambitious and impressive. In a head-spinningly short amount of time, they were opening their doors to the public.

Not only was the restaurant space exciting, so too was the news of who would be running the kitchen. Jim Christiansen came through the ranks of various Tim McKee restaurants. He was the chef who tried to wrestle expectations of owners and customers at Il Gatto, before taking some much needed time off to travel and cook at what is the hottest restaurant on the planet, Noma.



(From top) Dine out all year round while protected from the elements under UNION's retractable rooftop; Chef Christiansen helms the kitchen. Photos by Hubert Bonnet





Christiansen grew up in Eden Prairie in a home where his mom was, in his words, a great cook; the kind of mother who did a lot of scratch cooking. Like many young chefs, he began his career on the line at McDonalds. The desire to become a chef didn't come to him immediately. He said it took the questioning of a high school teacher who asked him specifically, "What do you *like* to do?" After much thought, he decided he did enjoy cooking. From high school he went to vocational school to study the culinary arts.

After school, he found his way to La Belle Vie in Stillwater. He wandered in and found YC, Chef de Cuisine at La Belle Vie, Mike DeCamp. Christiansen asked about an internship, DeCamp responded with,

"Okay," and thus began his career.

Much of his experience was working with award-winning chef Tim McKee. McKee has a reputation of fostering some of the top culinary talent in town. Christiansen helped close La Belle Vie in Stillwater and open the current Minneapolis location. He also spent time at Sea Change before following McKee to work at Il Gatto, where he ran the kitchen. The restaurant was challenged with expectations of long-time customers of Figlio, which had held that historic location for years. Eventually, the restaurant was shuttered and Christiansen was left adrift. For the first time in his life he had some time and very little pressure. He decided to do what is called a *stage* in the

Continued on page 24 ➔

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SLICE



(From left) These savory donut holes are the dish everyone is buzzing about; Duck from Au Bon Canard, one of Chef Christiansen's favorite entrees.

business, which is when a chef will work for free at another restaurant in exchange for knowledge and new experiences. He went to Demark to work at Noma, arguably the best restaurant in the world at this moment.

While there, he received an email about what would become UNION. At the time, he admits he blew it off. He was busy. Exhausted and working for free in a foreign country, Minneapolis was thousands of miles away and the furthest thing from his mind. Back home, we collectively held our breath, would he ever return? Were we about to lose this considerable talent to the greater world?

Eventually, he found his way home, landing in St. Louis Park, where he lives with his partner Jon. Even better for them, Jon coincidentally works across the street from the UNION location, so the two are able to steal the occasional lunch together.

Once he was committed to the new restaurant, Christiansen began to spin his culinary magic and form the menu. One of the first items he worked to develop would become one of the most popular dishes on the menu, the savory donut holes. Tender and breaded, they come with molten cheese and are easily popped one after another

while perfectly paired with one of their craft cocktails.

The menu is stacked with as many local, sustainably raised ingredients as possible. The chicken is from Kadejan, the greens from Dragsmith, and so on.

During the course of our conversation, I asked Chef Christiansen about his experience as a gay man in the industry what his experience has been like. He said, "It never really came into play. When you're young it's like, do you come out to your bosses? What do you do? The restaurant business is so open. It draws people in—a lot

Continued on page 26 ➔





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## NEWSY BITS

New restaurants are popping up all over town, from the North Loop to St. Paul.

**Borough** and **Parlor** are now open in Minneapolis's ever-growing North Loop area, the kitchen is run by two Travail alumni and the downstairs craft cocktail hot spot is helmed by the head of the Northstar Bartender's Guild. **Smack Shack** says they really, truly and honestly, will be opening soon; and Issac Becker's new venture is fast taking shape at Hennepin and Franklin in the old Burch's Pharmacy space. **Red Cow** will be opening this spring in a former Blockbuster space near 50th and France.

**Louis** atop Cossetta's in our capitol city is churning out Italian classics. Check out their killer happy hour menu for pre-show dining.

**Ward 6** is a sweet little neighborhood spot serving dinner while the **French Hen** on Selby has breakfast covered. And **French Meadow** will be adding a second location on Grand Ave.

So, re-up that gym membership and kick the spin into high gear, it's going to be a tasty year.





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f t y





WINTER WHAT TO DO  
EVENTS



BY ANDY LIEN

### CITY OF LAKES LOPPET

Minneapolis, MN  
February 2-3, 2013  
[www.cityoflakesloppet.com](http://www.cityoflakesloppet.com)

"The Urban Cross Country Ski Festival." Early in February, the City of Lakes becomes the City of Loppet as it will be host to cross country racers, spectators, vendors, and artists from around the world. A sculpture contest, plenty of beer and brats, skijoring, ice-cycling, and lovely luminaries make for an amazing weekend. Ever heard of the Swedish game of Kubb? No? Look it up on the Loppet website and find out. Then plan to watch or play it yourself. There's more to the Loppet than skiing!

CITY OF LAKES LOPPET. Photo by Hubert Bonnet



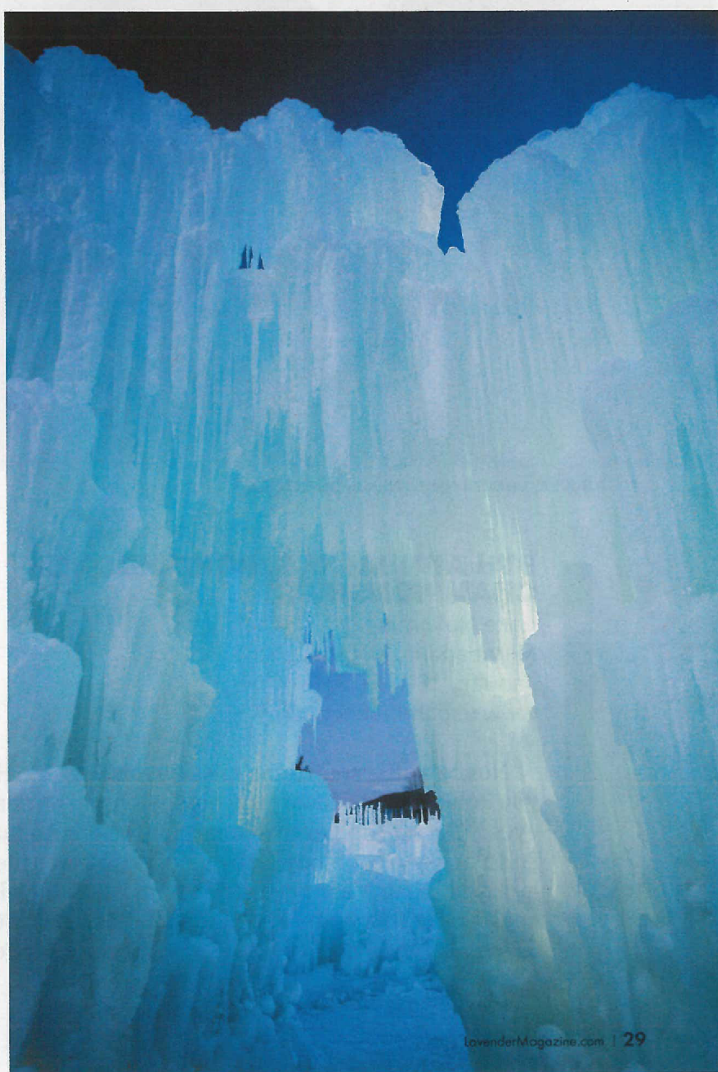


ICE CASTLE. Photos (above) by Ryan Davis and (right) Kendra Garvin

## ICE CASTLE

Mall of America North Parking Lot,  
Bloomington, MN  
through February 20, 2013 (depending on weather)  
Adults \$10, Children (3-10) \$5,  
Family 4-Pack (2 Adults, 2 Children \$25)  
Open daily, see hours on website  
[www.icecastles.com](http://www.icecastles.com)

In Minnesota, "Ice Castles" might conjure images of Winter Carnival Palaces past, built of blocks upon blocks. You might hum the song "Through The Eyes of Love" by Melissa Manchester, thanks to a tear-jerking movie of the same name about a figure skater in 1978 (I can't get it out of my head). You might envision "The Wall" in *Game of Thrones*, an expansive structure that exudes cold strength and fortification. While each of these has its appeal and similarities, the Ice Castle at the Mall of America is a bit more like something you'd see in *National Geographic*. Constructed of organically grown icicles fused together, previous Ice Castles have been popular in Utah and Colorado. This first appearance in Minnesota is also the largest Ice Castle to date, using over 4 million gallons of water frozen and fused together artistically and architecturally to make a structure that is two acres across and over 30 feet high...complete with towers, tunnels, archways, and even throne rooms with twinkling lights. Take your time exploring the Ice Castle and dress for the weather, you'll want to stick around a while.







POND HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP. Photo by Hubert Bonnet

## 8TH ANNUAL U.S. POND HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Lake Nokomis,  
Minneapolis, MN  
January 18 – 20, 2013  
[www.uspondhockey.com](http://www.uspondhockey.com)

Notice a little something missing this winter? HOCKEY, MAYBE? Does the NHL strike have you itching to see some guys and gals strap on some blades and play hockey in front of your very eyes? Get thee to Lake Nokomis for the 8th Annual U.S. Pond Hockey Championships and get yourself a hockey fix. Study up by going to the website and reading about the Golden Shovel and the role it played in our Viking heritage. And, if nothing else, go there to get some of the coolest gear our state sports offer this year—seriously, pond hockey's goods have designs on them that rank up there with Arctcrank. Pond hockey...“the way hockey was meant to be played.”



## 2013 SAINT PAUL WINTER CARNIVAL

Saint Paul, MN  
January 24 – February 3, 2013  
[www.winter-carnival.com](http://www.winter-carnival.com)

"The Coolest Celebration on Earth" is a bragworthy title to have...that it's been going since 1886 is even more impressive. The Saint Paul Winter Carnival is steadfast and true as a good friend who only visits once a year, but bring with them a whole lot of fun and excitement. Traditions of yore—including ice sculptures and parades and parties with Royalty, Vulcans, and Klondike Kates—are joined by newer traditions, such as the Beer Dabbler (as was at the 2012 Twin Cities Pride). Even Crashed Ice (below) is crashing the party this year. Make sure to be there.

2012 CRASHED ICE CHAMPIONSHIP. Photo by Sebastian Marko/Red Bull Content Pool

### 2013 CRASHED ICE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Saint Paul, MN  
January 24 – 26, 2013  
[www.redbullcrashedice.com](http://www.redbullcrashedice.com)  
Free to public

Did you make it to the big Crashed Ice World Championship in St. Paul last year? Did you see how the look the Saint Paul Cathedral can be when it's surrounded by people witnessing one of the craziest fast-paced ice events ever seen in Minnesota or all places? A track of ice constructed to incorporate one of the architectural gems of our state, Crashed Ice was anything but sacrilege; it was a heart-pounding thing of beauty to behold. The rules were simple to grasp—four racers at the top have to make it down to the bottom. Easy. Just ask some of our local mayors (ahem) and university mascots (ouch) how that track goes when you're flying around turns and over jumps on ice skates. Be sure to get there this year. Taking place during the Saint Paul Winter Carnival, you can seamlessly fit it into your outdoor recreation schedule. Dress in your winter best—and that means warm, not pretty. Wear some Snow Trax or other cleats because the tramped-down snow can get pretty slippery on that Hill. And, most of all, be prepared to swap stories in line for the steaming portable bathrooms. These winter events make us Minnesotans. ■



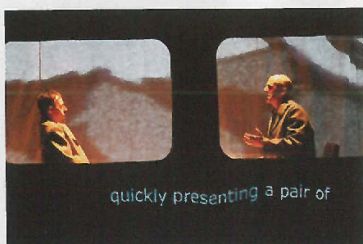


# HOW THE WALKER'S OUT THERE SERIES 'POST-MODERNIZED' TWIN CITIES AUDIENCES

BY JOHN TOWNSEND



(M)inosa/Twenty Looks or Paris Is Burning at the Judson Church. Photo by Paula Court



GANESH. Photo by Jeff Busby

*Its 25th  
Anniversary  
Continues With  
Dazzling  
Innovation*

For 25 years, the Walker Art Center's Out There performance series has reconfigured how local audiences perceive performing arts. It has consistently challenged mainstream notions of narrative performance. Because it brings in various high-caliber American and non-American productions from well beyond the Twin Cities, it is a crucial counterpoint to so many of the very commercial out of town productions that do not challenge audiences.

But then the Walker ranks as the foremost contemporary art center in so-called Middle America and has long delivered cutting edge concepts and ideas to Minnesota that would otherwise not have





*The Method Gun*, *Testament*, and an Out There group shot from 1990. Photos (l-r) by Alan Simons, Doro Tuch, and courtesy of the Walker Art Center.



been available. Thanks to the Walker, post-modernism is now a fully absorbed concept among Twin Cities arts patrons. Not to mention the Out There festivals, along with other Walker performance programming, have been exceedingly inclusive of queer fare for decades. If you appreciate that Minneapolis is a mecca for GLBT people, then you can extend that appreciation to the Walker for its enduring embrace of queer-oriented work. It's always been a safe space.

Though the Walker Performing Arts Director John Killacky launched Out There a quarter century ago, he points out that his predecessor, Nigel Redden, had actually begun inclusion of boundary-breaking performers. Redden generated a post-modern demand. Killacky recounts that during his own tenure, "while brainstorming, we decided we wanted to present work that was really 'out there.' We searched and searched for a title, then realized that OUT THERE was perfect. Since performance artists were the emerging trends, we decided to invite two iconic figures that first season, David Cale and Rachel Rosenthal. If memory

serves me right, David brought a work by his then-boyfriend and Rachel Rosenthal, with her fabulous shaved head, brought along her dead white rat. A late night showcase featuring local artists was emceed by Michael Sommers." (Note: Much of Killacky's Walker programming was aggressively queer and brought on the wrath of GOP Senator Jesse Helms.)

After Killacky left over a decade ago, Philip Bither filled his shoes admirably with his own distinct eye to radical alternative performance. When asked about the post-modern aspect he shares, "the works in recent years by the Out There Festival can clearly be situated in the realm of post-modernism—they often created their own reality, directly reject concepts of high art and low art, draw from a diverse range of styles and artistic disciplines within each work, can be read in numerous ways, are not based around the centrality of the written text, and often non-linear." Hands-on workshops by the featured artists, artist talks, and social events are also part of the series.

Two of this year's 25th Anniversary selections actually turn

the very notion of a text on its head. The Midwest debut of *The Method Gun* (January 10-12) by Texas-based Rude Mechs, is an irreverent spoof on an acting class in which the students do crying exercises and stage Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire* without its four main characters.

Berlin's She She Pop troupe re-invents Shakespeare with the actual fathers of the actresses. Titled *Testament* (January 17-19), collaborator Ilia Papatheodorou says "we wanted to use *King Lear* merely as a jumping-off point for a live controversial discussion with our fathers about questions of old age that nobody dares to ask. An unexpected and uncontrollable element comes from asking our fathers to share the stage with us. That is a personal risk for every performer that most people in the audience can relate to."

The 25th Anniversary's queerest and most erotic offering is the bedazzling *(M)imosa/ Twenty Looks or Paris Is Burning at the Judson Church* (January 24-26), a kinetic, contortionist, genderbending collaboration by artists from Paris and New York with a beguiling array of music

selections and lip-synching. Bither compares it to "a drag show from Mars—constantly surprising, outrageously surreal, funny, at times very moving, intentionally destabilizing. Like all of Trajal Harrell's recent work, inspired by the dual influences of the underground voguing scene in Harlem of the '60s and the post-modern dance revolution of the same period, it celebrates gender fluidity with fabulous, uproarious joy."

Australia's Back to Back Theatre ends the 25th series with a fascinating exploration of how images get appropriated and grotesquely exploited. *Ganesh Versus the Third Reich* (January 31-February 2) has an elephant-headed god going to Nazi Germany to return the symbol of the swastika to its Hindu origins. The ensemble has featured actors with disabilities and the production has been praised for its surrealism, poignancy, and courage. □

#### Out There 25: Reality/Identity/ Myth

Through Feb. 2  
Walker Art Center, 1750 Hennepin Av., Mpls.  
[612] 375-7600  
www.walkerart.org





BY ANDY LIEN

VANCOUVER, COMPACT GLASS CITY. Photo courtesy of Tourism Vancouver.

### WINTER WHAT TO DO: NEAR/FAR GETAWAYS

Around this time of year, the stir-craziness sets in. Whether it's cabin fever or just a latent wanderlust from the warmer months, I always want to get moving and get going. Somewhere. Anywhere. Usually depending upon pocketbook and calendar constraints, I can come up with a plan—and if it embraces the season, rather than hides from it, I pat myself on the back for being a hardy Minnesotan. With that in mind, we present some options for enjoying the winter in the colder climes, with two nearby options (Lutsen and Madison) and two far-away destinations (Vancouver and Whistler).



WHISTLER, BC



WINTERPRIDE IN WHISTLER. Photo courtesy of GayWhistler.com

LUTSEN, MN



LUTSEN SLOPES. Photo by Hubert Bonnet

VANCOUVER, BC



GRANVILLE ISLAND. Photo courtesy of Tourism Vancouver

MADISON, WI



MADISON IN WINTER. Photo by iStockPhoto





BY ANDY LIEN

## FAR-FLUNG SKI TRIP: WHERE ELSE BUT WHISTLER?

It's winter and you want to get away. The Swiss Alps might not be an option, but perhaps somewhere in North America will sweep you off your feet in British Columbia, Canada. Try Whistler for downhill skiing, snowboarding, shopping, eating, drinking, and hot-tubbing. Go during WinterPRIDE and turn it into one big party—we could use a cool winter counterpart to our sundry summer Pride celebrations. Surrounded by mountains in a snow-covered wonderland, you'll feel far away from anything resembling your daily routine.

WINTERPRIDE. Photo courtesy of GayWhistler.com

It'll even feel a little worldly in an Olympic sort of way with plenty of updates and enhancements that were made for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver when Whistler hosted many of the downhill skiing events. Keep an eye out for the five rainbow rings—Olympic reminders are both in the Village and up the mountains.

### WHERE TO GO:

Your trip starts before you get to Whistler. Accessible by train, car, airport transfer, bus, taxi, helicopter, or ride-share, you need to get yourself to Whistler, somehow. But, just because you can't fly there, doesn't mean you should dismay—you get to witness some of the most beautiful coastal scenery along the **Sea-to-Sky Highway**. Prepare a good soundtrack for this trip, we chose dramatic movie scores by the composer Hans Zimmer and it felt like it was a film...and ran about the same length of time with sweeping views set to majestic music.

Whistler is comprised of an Upper and Lower Village and two mountains that are connected at the top by a gondola. **Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains** used to be two separate skiing areas until one was sold to the other. How do you buy a moun-

tain? How do you sell a mountain? I can't quite fathom the transaction, but the result is a good one—a skiing package includes both mountains. The winter average for snowfall is 39.1 feet and the temperature is usually around 22°F. With over 200 trails, the 37 lifts can accommodate transporting over 65,000 up the mountains per hour. It's popular and it's ready for you to join the fun.

Whether you're wearing skis or not, there's one big red reason to take a lift upward—the **Peak2Peak Gondola**. Built in 2008, Peak2Peak joins Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains as a 1.88-mile long, completely unsupported lift. The ride between the mountains is 11 minutes of breathtaking views of all sides—up, down, and all around. And, as Dean Nelson of GayWhistler.com told us, plenty riders have mastered the art of shaking up some cocktails to enjoy in those 11 minutes: Fly the friendly skies.

Back down on the ground, **Whistler Village** is rather dense with shops, restaurants, and hotels in the Lower Village while mostly hotels and access to the lifts are in the Upper Village. A short walk between the two can find you suddenly in the mix of an outdoor shopping mall with the same sorts of

stores you can find at home (or anywhere... like GAP, Eddie Bauer, North Face). We shopped the sales racks and found better deals in Whistler than at home, even given the difference in US and Canadian dollar values. There are plenty of places to buy souvenirs and even at least one bookstore to tuck into and find a quiet read for the spa.

Many of the hotels have spas in them, but we ventured out to the **Scandinave Spa** outside of the Village, set on a hill in the mountains...surrounded by trees and privacy. If you've never experienced a Scandinavian style spa, it is based on the principles of heating and then cooling, somewhat rapidly. Having a eucalyptus-scented steam room, some saunas, some cool pools and showers, hot tubs, and solariums, the Scandinave Spa lets you choose your own style for your heating and cooling road to Wellville. Relaxing in a steam room would be followed by stepping into a cold shower. Or, opening up the pores in the sauna would be followed by closing them in a shockingly cool pool. You create your own circuit of sorts which could last as long or as short as you'd like, but each must end with some quiet time in a solarium, warming back up. The rule is that there's no talking at Scan-

Continued on page 38 ➔

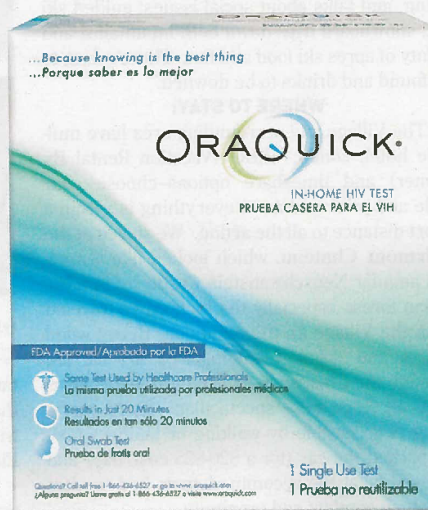


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dinave Spa, which is remarkably easy to follow the whole time while relaxing, but remarkably hard to adhere to when being doused by cold water. Be sure to check the massage options as well, the Scandinavians know how to knead out a knot or two.

Finally and most importantly, more alluring than just the fact that Whistler is the top ski destination in North America is the fact that it holds a week-long **WinterPRIDE**. **GayWhistler.com** coordinates an annual celebration of all-things-GLBT with special rates and activities; this year, WinterPRIDE is February 3-10, 2013. While there are no gay bars in Whistler, WinterPRIDE pretty much takes over the Village and the slopes for a week with special parties; daytime activities like ziplining, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and talks about social issues; guided ski and snowboard trips down both mountains; and plenty of apres ski food and fun. There's drag to be found and drinks to be downed.

#### WHERE TO STAY:

The Village and surrounding area have multiple hotel, condo, VRBO (Vacation Rental By Owner) and timeshare options—choose your style and price and most everything is within a short distance to all the action. We stayed at the **Fairmont Chateau**, which looked like a modern angular Neuschwanstein Castle set in a Bavarian forest, especially the farther we traveled from the Village up the mountain. Heavy wood beams and colorful folk-inspired art carried through the Chateau feel inside, while the views from all sides were spectacular. Since everything is accessible by walking or taking a taxi, we parked the car (for a \$20-\$25 cost/day) and enjoyed what the accommodations had to offer us: plush comfort and proximity.

#### WHERE TO EAT/DRINK:

Choosing a restaurant in Whistler can be as easy as choosing your hotel—most of the hotels have casual cafes as well as more formal dining destinations. **The Wildflower** at the Fairmont Chateau had the most luscious breakfast, something I'd heard of from foodie friends who'd already eaten there—the brunch is tremendous and spectacular. Lunch at **Nita Lake Lodge** south of the Whistler Village Area had a lovely lighter soup and sandwich fare for pre-trudging in nature. Stay where you eat or eat where you stay—there are plenty of options.

As for restaurants that weren't attached to accommodations, we went with places that people



WINTERPRIDE. Photos by GayWhistler.com

had personally vouched for—places that have thrilled previous foodie friends when they've dined at them: **RimRock Cafe** and **Araxi Restaurant + Bar**. **RimRock Cafe** is a modest, warm lodge-like restaurant, just south of the Village. Separate from the hustle and bustle, RimRock is relaxing and the ambiance is embracing. A nice menu with lovely variations of fish, seafood, meats, and seasonal vegetables and grains, we chose the Prix Fixe option that was the most affordable splurge of our dining endeavors. Our beginnings included a Roasted Beet Salad with apples, avocado, and a champagne vinaigrette. My friend ordered the fish while I ordered the Scallops and Pork Belly, but asked them to hold the Scallops since I don't eat fish or seafood. That's right. I

got Pork Belly with Pork Belly—and was very happy. We ended with the Sticky Toffee Pudding. Read that again and know that it was as good as it sounds, rich and gooey.

Despite the superb meal we enjoyed at RimRock, the culinary winner of our trip to Vancouver and Whistler was **Araxi Restaurant + Bar**. We spent hours there; bantering with the servers, sipping the different wines, slurping the coastal oysters, and munching the dessert macarons. Araxi is the place to see and be seen right in heart of the Lower Village. A wide-open room full of tables upon tables, you can look around and make eye contact with people you've been spying on all day while riding the gondolas and lifts, or perusing the sales racks. Starting with special oysters chosen after studying the list and consulting the Australian server, we moved leisurely to our main entrees. The menu has changed since our visit but Roasted Saddle of Rabbit with pork cheek looks to be similar to one of the succulent dishes we devoured, something which we would write home about. Thankfully, the dessert menu still features our favorites: Poached Anjou Pears with chevre cheesecake and hazelnut streusel crust which was more of a fork-food paired with the Fuji Apple Beignets, pecan donuts filled with apple which we happily dunked in caramel-milk chocolate sauce. We gilded the hell out of that lily. When it was finally time to bid adieu to our meal, we took some macarons to go for enjoying back in the hotel...it helped ease the departure. Too bad they don't deliver to Minnesota. □

#### WHERE TO GO ONLINE:

WinterPRIDE (Feb. 3-10, 2013)/  
[GayWhistler.com](http://GayWhistler.com) – Dean Nelson  
[www.gaywhistler.com](http://www.gaywhistler.com)  
 Shopping and Attractions in the Village  
[www.tourismwhistler.com](http://www.tourismwhistler.com)  
 Skiing/Peak2Peak Gondola  
[www.whistlerblackcomb.com](http://www.whistlerblackcomb.com)  
 Fairmont Chateau Whistler  
[www.fairmont.com/whistler](http://www.fairmont.com/whistler)  
 RimRock Cafe  
[www.rimrockwhistler.com](http://www.rimrockwhistler.com)  
 Nita Lake Lodge  
[www.nitalakelodge.com](http://www.nitalakelodge.com)  
 Araxi Restaurant + Bar  
[www.araxi.com](http://www.araxi.com)  
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Photo by Mike Crane/Tourism Whistler







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**FARMERS**







BY ANDY LIEN

## LUTSEN, MINNESOTA

Ski Near Here? Go North.

Itching to get out into the snow here in Minnesota? Want to get some wind as you ski down the tallest mountain in the largest ski area in the Midwest? You need to aim for Lutsen on the North Shore of Lake Superior. If you're like me and grew up in Minnesota hearing about "Lutsen this" and "Lutsen that," it's a whole lot more than just skiing up there, too.

LUTSEN'S SKI SLOPES. Photo by Hubert Bonnet

Each time I'd pass Lutsen on the way to the Boundary Waters or Gunflint Trail or Grand Marais, I'd wonder—and now I know—what I've been missing by not stopping to enjoy what's up and along Lake Superior between Tofte and Grand Marais.

### WHERE TO GO:

If you want to downhill ski, you're going to go to the **Lutsen Mountains**, of which there are four: Moose Mountain, Mystery Mountain, Eagle Mountain, and Ullr Mountain. In a tight area that bustles with activity, the chairlifts and gondola move people up so that they can ski down...but there are also multiple restaurants and bars to enjoy while on either direction of your vertical journey. Most notably, **Papa Charlie's** is a well-known bar and music venue that gets some national names on the calendar. A great apres-ski option for those interested in ending a day on the slopes with a night of tunes.

**Grand Marais** is the hub of activity in Cook County with its shops, art, waterfront, and access to the start of the **Gunflint Trail**. In the winter, it's a whole different town than when it swarms with tourists in the warmer months. I pretty much loved it, being able to wander and park wherever I wanted to. Still warm enough to get out to amble on the rocks by the lighthouse before

they iced over, the warmth of Lake Superior belied the snow that was falling further offshore where the Nordic skiing and dogsledding are popular activities.

Oh, the winter activities. What to do? Exactly. So much.

My biggest piece of advice for what to do is: ask. Get the to **Stone Harbor Wilderness Supply** in Grand Marais (next to the GLBT-friendly East Bay Suites). An attractive, newly redesigned building along the shore, Stone Harbor should be considered not only an outfitter, but a concierge. Sitting down with owner, Jack Stone, and employee Jan Lemke, it was obvious that the people are the most valuable resource in Grand Marais. Stone Harbor can sell you equipment and clothing for winter activities, or you can rent it there...you know, in case you don't need an amazingly warm and weatherproof anorak for your dayjob downtown. Want to go dogsledding? Talk to them, they'll set it up. Cross-country skiing? Absolutely. Snowshoeing? Certainly. Ice fishing? Sure. Ice climbing? NEVER IN MY LIFE. But...you can. You more adventurous and nimble souls can contact Stone Harbor to get set up to climb frozen waterfalls. And, more importantly, Jack and Jan not only speak to the winter activities in Grand Marais, but the

GLBT culture in Cook County. Jack, a strong ally, sees it as pretty much a non-issue in the area. Jan, whose partner works in an art gallery in town, jokes about how they've talked of organizing and having a little parade in what they could rename "Gay Marais," there is such a large and welcoming community there. Comfort is key when we travel, as is community...whether indoors or out.

Not interested in being outdoors? The **North House Folk School** may have all your answers. Looking like a little fishing village of yore, the colorful compound of buildings in Grand Marais that houses North House beckons to anyone interested in learning "traditional northern crafts" like basketry, woodcarving, fiber arts, timber frames, wooden boats, rosemaling, knitting, and more. Look at the extensive catalog online for more information—you may want to stay a while.

### WHERE TO STAY:

There was no question in my mind, the piece de resistance to staying in Lutsen is the iconic **Lutsen Resort**. Depending upon how important proximity-to-ski is, you may choose to look at some of the accommodations on the mountains, but Lutsen Resort sang its siren song of Lake Superior to me. The resort has a free shuttle up the mountain for skiers (which is so very convenient), so why not



stay where the view is the largest freshwater lake in the world? In buildings that were constructed before setback requirements were so strict, I slept to the sounds of waves crashing. Being able to choose from different accommodation options is an important feature at Lutsen Resort.

Lutsen Resort is Minnesota's oldest resort, established in 1885. The Lodge, itself, was built in the mid-1950s and is the quintessential lumber-and-stone structure that keeps the fireplaces glowing. There are condominiums that are new and modern; particularly accommodating for couples in search of a romantic getaway. As someone who wasn't bringing romance, but instead brought a dog, I chose the Sea Villa Townhomes, which are a bit south of the rest of the resort, and would recommend them to anyone in a heartbeat. Each with private owners but managed by Lutsen Resort, the Sea Villas hug the shore of Lake Superior and can accommodate both small and large groups. Dog-friendly, our Villa had two bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a loft...as well as wifi, cable, a gorgeously appointed granite, glass-tile, and stainless kitchen, and a view to die for. And, the dog walks in the snow were breathtaking.

Waking up on the shore of Lake Superior is relaxing, but getting a massage while overlooking Lake Superior is almost gluttonous. Lutsen Resort hosts **WatersMeet Spa & Wellness Center**, an Aveda spa. Pulling up to the building, I parked the Jeep next to a truck for sled dogs with an HRC bumper sticker on it and knew I'd be comfortable for the next stretch of hours. My massage therapist, Di Higgins, actually relaxed my shoulders to the point that they're down where they should be, instead of up by my ears. And, Nancy Lang, the owner of sled dogs, the truck with the VOTE NO and HRC bumper stickers, and also an EMT in the area, not only helped my friend in terms of massage and relaxation, but also talked to us for a great while about the welcoming and open culture in Cook County for members of the GLBT community. Now THAT'S relaxing.

#### WHERE TO EAT/DRINK:

One of the most popular packages at **Lutsen Resort** is the Bed & Breakfast package in which breakfast at the lodge is included in the

stay. We enjoyed eggs benedict and the somewhat-famous buffet in the Scandinavian surroundings of the lodge, with bottomless cups of coffee. It was comfortable, as was the food.

Venturing out from the resort, there are a ridiculous number of dining options in the summertime, but the winter has a pared down list. It's best to check websites and ask around before getting set on a place you may have eaten at or heard about before.

All along Highway 61 in Cook County are attractions and stops, not to mention places to eat. The **Bluefin Grille** at Bluefin Bay in Tofte, just south of Lutsen, is a respected and solid destination for a decadent evening of drinks and dinner. Chef David Grimsley sends out culinary combinations that are seasonal and somewhat surprising. The Salametti and Pratost of cured Italian sausage, mild swedish cheese, on hearty freshly baked whole wheat toast, was topped with light mango. The coolish-to-room-temperature Pumpkin and Quinoa Salad was the hit of the meal, with feta and onions all covered in an orange vinaigrette. The fish of the day was a tasty Monkfish, enjoyed by my friend, while I devoured the Roasted Chicken that was so savory and salty, swimming in a somewhat sweet marscapone and lingonberry cream (be still, my Swedish heart). We capped the evening with the signature dessert of Bluefin Grille: the luscious, crispy-yet-goopy chocolate chip cookie served in a mini-cast iron skillet a la mode.

Grand Marais, to the north of Lutsen, will see an increase in restaurants reopening now that we're into 2013. I was pleased to get to try a new restaurant that had just been open a little over a month in the former Chez Jude space, **The Harbor House Grille**. Chef Ed Straub and his wife, Cindy, were lovely hosts to a lunch of woodfire oven Blue Fungi (mushrooms, caramelized onions, and blue cheese) Pizza, a Grand Grilled Cheese (with roasted onion jam, Wisconsin cheddar, and Canadian bacon), and the yummiest French Onion Soup in recent memory.

For those craving sweets in the colder months, don't go looking for the donuts of summer, but flock to **The Pie Place**. A cute restaurant right by the water, we chose to take our slices to go and enjoyed them later

in the evening in the warmth and cozyness of the Sea Villa. Must-haves? The Chocolate Cream Pie is like a pots de creme in a crust. The Maple Pecan Pie will make you never want to go back to "just pecan" ever again. And, there are so many Apple Pies on the menu, I have no idea which one I had... but, judging from the crumbly topped goodness of that one, they're all worth nabbing.

Looking for dinner, drinks, and live music? **The Gun Flint Tavern** was our answer to a cold night in need of warming up from the inside out. With an extensive menu, our choices for dinner were ones that didn't scream "North Shore" but, instead, were closer to the Equator. When you see Jalapeno Popper Quesadilla on the menu but then read that it includes pineapple, don't shy away: ORDER IT. Even this Swede with what I call the "beige palate" could handle this heat-creamy, sweet, and kicky, I almost wanted to order a second one. The Cuban was a worthy sandwich with shredded barba-coa pork, swiss cheese, pickles, and aioli... but the Tavern Burger with its jalapeno bacon, melty swiss, and-get this-coffee onions was divine. Complete with live music, the Tavern was a warm port on a cold night. □

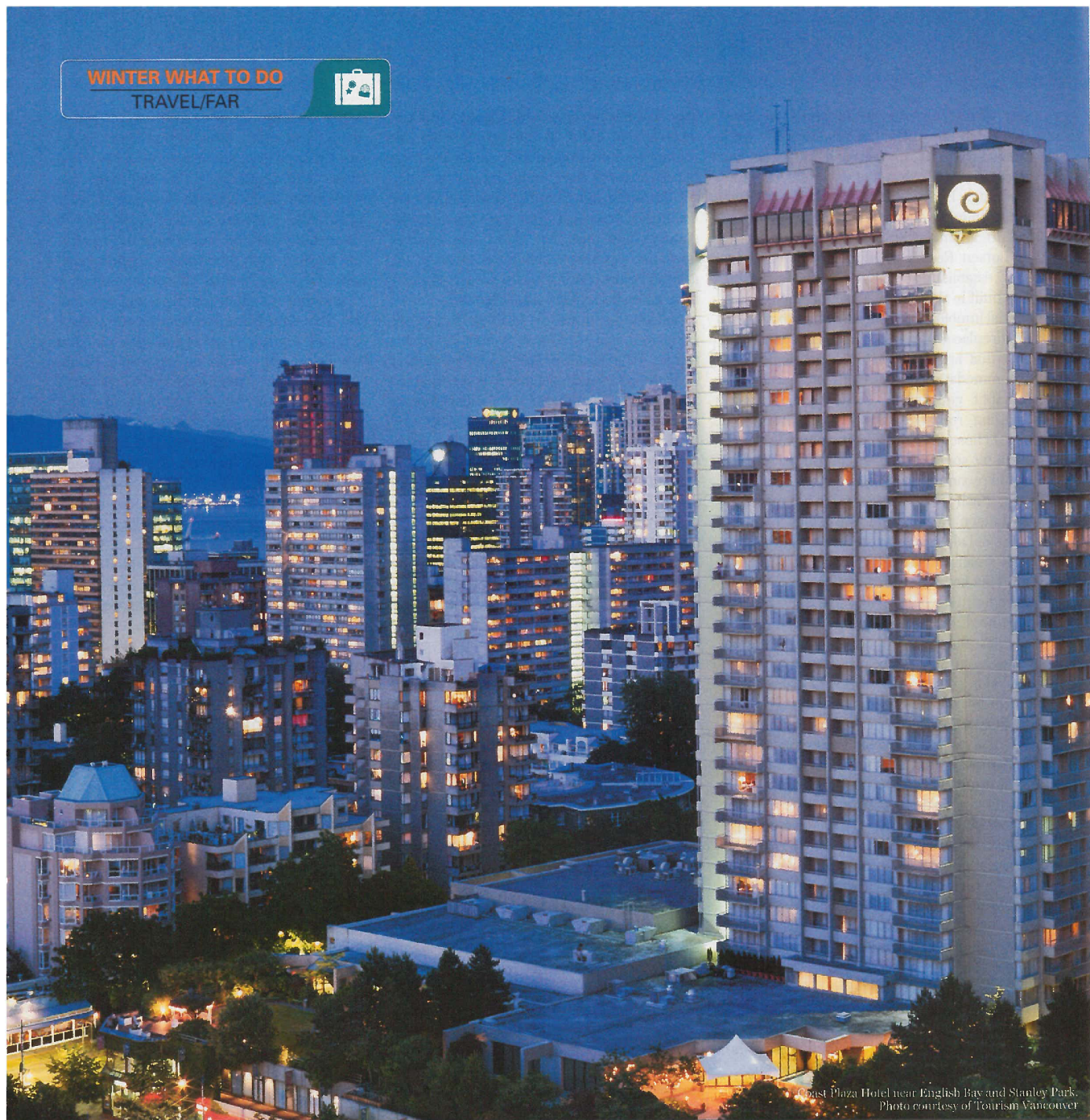
#### WHERE TO GO ONLINE:

Lutsen Skiing/Papa Charlie's  
[www.lutsen.com](http://www.lutsen.com)  
 Lutsen Resort  
[www.lutsenresort.com](http://www.lutsenresort.com)  
 WatersMeet Spa & Wellness Center  
[www.nsmassagetherapy.com](http://www.nsmassagetherapy.com)  
 Stone Harbor Wilderness Supply  
[www.stoneharborws.com](http://www.stoneharborws.com)  
 Harbor House Grille  
[www.harborhousegrille.com](http://www.harborhousegrille.com)  
 Bluefin Grille  
[www.bluefinbay.com](http://www.bluefinbay.com)  
 The Gun Flint Tavern  
[www.gunflinttavern.com](http://www.gunflinttavern.com)  
 North House Craft School  
[www.northhouse.org](http://www.northhouse.org)  
 The Pie Place Cafe  
[www.thepieplacecafe.com](http://www.thepieplacecafe.com)  
 Cook County (Tofte, Lutsen, Grand Marais, Gunflint Trail, Grand Portage)  
[www.visitcookcounty.com](http://www.visitcookcounty.com)

L-R: Rainbow bottles at Stone Harbor Wilderness Supply, photo courtesy of Stone Harbor; Crafty at North House Folk School, photo by Andy Lien; Grand Marais' own Jan Lemke's decal that went viral, photo by Andy Lien; Lutsen Gondola, photo courtesy of Lutsen Mountains; and Grand Marais at Sunset, photo courtesy of Cook County Visitors Bureau.







Coast Plaza Hotel near English Bay and Stanley Park.  
Photo courtesy of Tourism Vancouver

BY ANDY LIEN WITH CARSON RIUTTA

### VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA: A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

Vancouver, British Columbia. The place where so many of our favorite television shows are filmed happens to be a destination in and of itself. A winter one, even? Indeed. There's nary a flake of snow to be found and sidewalks tend to be much safer to traverse when that's the case. Instead of leaving home in search of warm and sunny beaches, I find it easy to recommend Vancouver, a place that seems to peek into the future, while holding onto history and academia and recreation and sports and art and culture and shopping and food and so much more...all in a small, accessible area just north of Seattle, Washington.



What's so futuristic about Vancouver? Most specifically, the state of GLBT rights. Go there. Be comfortable. Get married if you want. Enjoy the future.

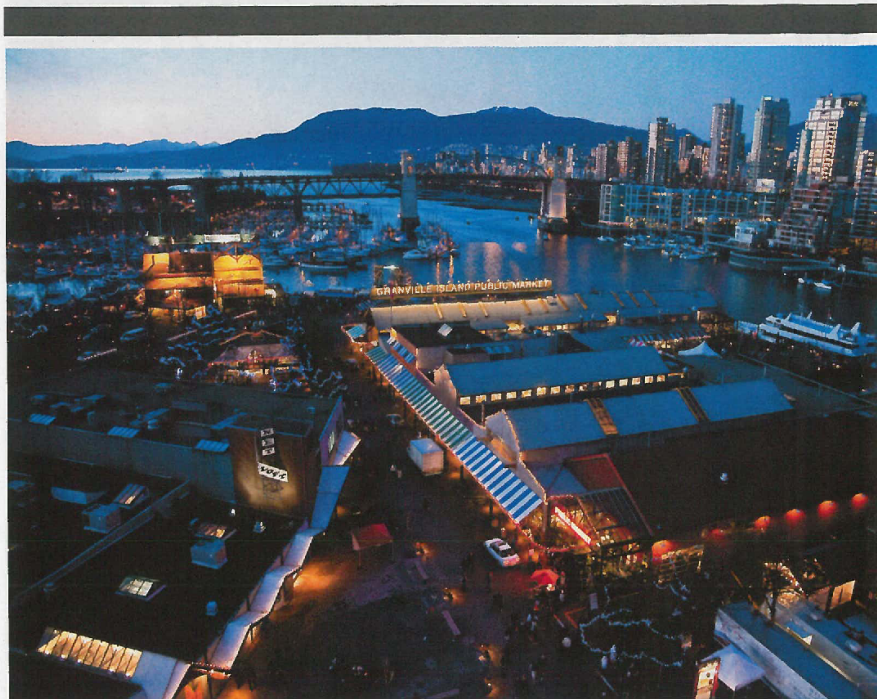
#### WHERE TO GO:

**Davie Village** is Vancouver's gay neighborhood and gay pride is literally hanging from every lamp post. Rainbow banners flank the street for miles and give the neighborhood a bright colorful vibe even on the greyest of days. The Village has everything: coffee shops, restaurants, dry cleaners, markets, night clubs, and bookstores. If nightlife is what you're after, you will be sure to find your scene here. Don't forget to check **Gay-van.com** for any special parties and events going on in the Village during your stay. Stop in at the award-winning **Little Sister's Book & Art Emporium** which has been serving Canada's adult GLBT community since 1983. If you're looking for shopping in a lesbian area of town, you can cross the bridges and get to **Commercial Drive** to check that action.

If you or your partner is a foodie or an artist, you'll want to carve plenty of time out of your trip to enjoy all that **Granville Island** has to offer. It's a small place, but is jam-packed with gorgeous farm-fresh foods, art studios, unique shops, and beautiful views of the water. Be sure to show up hungry, but make the rounds before you decide where and what to eat; with each stall in the market the food only seems to get better and better. Had we thought about it ahead of time, we would've bought satchels of the amazing food in the market to bring back to the kitchenette in our hotel. Learn from our mistake. Take it with you.

We planned our Granville Island adventure to start with the **Aquabus** on **False Creek**...little did we know that the trip would be about four minutes long on a vessel that was actually a pontoon (which was a bit hilarious to this Minnesotan). Our departure from the Island for Yaletown was a bit longer a boat ride, so we encourage you to incorporate the Aquabus into your travel plans to see more of Vancouver from the water.

Getting off the Aquabus at **Yaletown** was the beginning of a stretch of neigh-



Granville Island. Photo courtesy of Tourism Vancouver

borhoods. Other neighborhoods of note in Vancouver are **Yaletown**, **Chinatown**, **Downtown**, and the theatre arts district of **Granville Street**. Our favorite neighborhood was named for the gregarious man who opened the first saloon in Vancouver, John "Gassy Jack" Deighton. "**Gastown**" has stayed true to its roots. It is a funky neighborhood, with great restaurants on every corner, tourists on every cobblestone, and a seedy element that gives Gastown its gritty vibe.

The on-and-off trolley or bus idea is great for Vancouver in the respect that the trolley will take you everywhere you might want to go-but you can actually get off where you want to see in greater depth. Good for reconnaissance, great for transit. With attractions like the Aquarium, Maritime Museum, beyond the compact downtown area, it's important to know which of the on-and-off ser-

vices can get you places...and where might require taxis. The **Vancouver Trolley Company** served us well for most everything we wanted to see, though we often just hoofed it due to the fact that everything is fairly close in proximity.

What's a little bit out of the way is the **University of British Columbia** with Botanical Gardens and the world-famous **Museum of Anthropology**. When I surveyed people as to what CANNOT be missed in Vancouver, the Museum of Anthropology was the resounding answer. Sure, it shows that I run with nerds, but it is worth a trip to the campus to see the amazing collection of culture and art. It's extensive. Masks and weapons and sculptures and drawers upon drawers full of artifacts...totem poles and so many beautiful dishes. My nerdery has a threshold and it was hit a few hours into the Museum, which

2010 Olympic Cauldron. Photo courtesy of Tourism Vancouver







Left: Putting Vancouver in perspective.  
Photo courtesy of Tourism Vancouver  
Below Left: Museum of Anthropology at UBC.  
Photo by Andy Lien



was perfect in timing to move on to the next great thing Vancouver had to offer.

With 1,001 acres of West Coast rainforest, **Stanley Park** is an impressive natural space right next to the hustle and bustle of downtown Vancouver. You can book a horse-drawn carriage tour to see a portion of the park and hear its rich history. Or, if you would rather get some exercise, then cycle or walk the 5.5 mile sea wall trail that circles the park. Don't miss the majestic hand-carved Totem Poles and definitely keep your eyes peeled for the mounted police.

#### WHERE TO STAY:

Stay near the action. Everything is close in Vancouver. The **Coast Plaza Hotel** by English Bay was our Vancouver home and within blocks of it were not only Davie Street, but also the beach and Stanley Park, an urban public park that's even bigger than NYC's Central Park. The Coast Plaza was a little aged, but provided a comfortable suite with kitchenette for us and also had a mall beneath it, with a grocery store. (Have you had potato chips in Canada, yet? Stock up on the 'exotic' flavors.)

This is a city that can be enjoyed on foot, trolley, ferry and by taxi, so leave your cars at home and the hassles of parking behind. If

you do drive or rent a car, please keep in mind that parking in Vancouver proper is very tight and hotels can charge upwards of \$25/day. Get yourselves an on-and-off trolley pass and get ready to see the sights from comfortable, clean, and convenient public transportation.

Something that may not be entirely obvious as you look at the maps of the Vancouver area is that it's really not that big. I had to repeatedly adjust my plans as I figured out that it was easier to walk most places than I'd imagined.

#### WHERE TO EAT/DRINK:

Being a global hotbed, I did some significant research when it came to planning the most important part of our visit to Vancouver: the food. From the New York Times and other online reviews, I found that **Market by Jean-Georges** was one of the places to eat in Vancouver, housed in the opulent and elegant Shangri-La Hotel, downtown. I'm not going to go into that one in great depth because it was a disappointment in the quality and taste of cuisine. Market's service was stupendous, the atmosphere was chic and sexy, but the fare was bland.

Also heavily lauded in reviews is the **Salt Tasting Room** in Blood Alley, located in the Gastown neighborhood. It is worth the hype. It's also hard to find, which made it a little more fun for a lunchtime destination. If you find yourself rounding a corner into what looks like an alley with cobblestones underfoot, look up at the second story of the buildings and see if there's a flag with a salt shaker on it. Yes? You found it. The Salt Tasting Room is a tasting room, indeed, for wines, beer, and finger foods. Without a stove on the premises, you pick and choose your food from lists of artisanal cheeses,

small-batch cured meats, and different condiments. Delightful. And, for the sherry connoisseurs, it happens to have the best sherry collection in Vancouver.

Word of mouth is what brought us our favorite breakfast of the trip. **Medina Cafe** in the Crosstown neighborhood was what were ordered to find if we wanted the best breakfast in the city. Got it. A funky space with a front room and a sunny back room, Medina served us rich and throaty coffee as well as both a Fricassee (of eggs, braised short rib, applewood cheddar, and balsamic onions) and a Saumon Fume (a ciabatta sandwich of egg, smoked salmon, caper cream cheese, and avocado)...all after we'd had our amuse bouche of a waffle with lavender-flavored milk chocolate for dipping. Ridiculous and worth a return trip.

Finally, the **Cactus Club Cafe** is what we found on foot from the Coast Plaza Hotel late at night. Set on the beach at English Bay, we judged a book by it's hip, mod cover and went to the Cactus Club for late-night noshes and cocktails and were not disappointed. She sipped her classy highball while I sipped the au jus sauce for my Short Rib Sandwich and we were pleased. To enjoy the ambience and view of the beach during the daytime will have to wait until the next visit.

#### WHERE TO GO ONLINE:

All Things Vancouver  
[www.tourismvancouver.com](http://www.tourismvancouver.com)  
GLBT Vancouver  
[www.gayvan.com](http://www.gayvan.com), Angus Praught  
Little Sister's Art & Book Emporium  
[www.littlesisters.ca](http://www.littlesisters.ca)  
Cactus Club Café  
[www.cactusclubcafe.com](http://www.cactusclubcafe.com)  
Coast Plaza Hotel  
[www.coasthotels.com](http://www.coasthotels.com)  
Granville Island  
[www.granvilleisland.com](http://www.granvilleisland.com)  
Aquabus  
[www.theaquabus.com](http://www.theaquabus.com)  
UBC Museum of Anthropology  
[www.moa.ubc.ca](http://www.moa.ubc.ca)  
The Vancouver Trolley Company  
[www.vancouvertrolley.com/](http://www.vancouvertrolley.com/)  
Stanley Park Horse-Drawn Tours  
[www.stanleyparktours.com](http://www.stanleyparktours.com)  
The Salt Tasting Room  
[www.salttastingroom.com](http://www.salttastingroom.com)  
Market by Jean-Georges  
[www.shangri-la.com/vancouver](http://www.shangri-la.com/vancouver)  
Medina Café  
[www.medinacafe.com](http://www.medinacafe.com)





BY JOY SUMMERS

## MADISON, WISCONSIN

It's a Mad, Mad, Mad Kind of Love.

I fell in love in Madison, Wisconsin. In the midst of tumbling snowflakes and gassing up my cherry red VW Cabriolet convertible, I saw the great love of my life through clear eyes and for a single, perfect moment, saw what my life would become.

The State Capitol of Wisconsin. Photo courtesy of iStockPhoto

However, that moment was a million years ago. Okay, ten, but it still feels like I was almost another girl then—one who didn't mind sleeping on couches as a means of travel. In the time since, I've become spoiled in my soft-hands existence. A weekend away would require culture, cuisine, and craft cocktails. I wondered what this college town would have in the way of an adult getaway.

### WHERE TO STAY:

For this journey we stayed at the brand

new **HotelRED**, located right across the street from historic Camp Randall stadium. It's a stylish spot with floor-to-ceiling windows, red and white accents mixed with industrial touches like poured concrete floors and gleaming silver fixtures. We were greeted with a refreshing little vodka-spiked fruity sipper. An adorable little dachshund shaped toy and bowl of Milkbones welcomed canine guests, a note for the dog owners out there.

Our room featured a plate of cheese and berries, while the space was lightly per-

fumed by Aveda products. All of the rooms are suites. Ours had a bathtub in the bedroom and a shower that functioned like a full-body bidet, no cranny left unclean, like being showered with liquid fireworks.

### WHERE TO GO:

Parking in Madison is a challenge, so it's best to leave the car and hit the streets on foot. Walking through the expansive campus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison with the stunning views, it's fun to see the

Continued on page 46 ➔





Yesteryear in the Corral Room.  
Photo courtesy of Corral Room and Tornado Room Steakhouse



A room at HotelRED, swank and urban. Photo courtesy of HotelRED

castle-like former armory decked out in rainbow gear, home to the LGBT student center.

Wandering downhill leads to State Street, packed with great shops, tons of restaurants, and the **Madison Museum of Contemporary Art**. Open most days at noon, the museum doesn't charge an admission fee.

After taking in the eye-popping art, those lids might get a little droopy. Best to hike over to **Michelangelo's**, an independently owned coffee shop known as a touchstone for the Madison gay community.

#### WHERE TO EAT/ DRINK:

Eventually, we had walked enough to justify more cheese (cheese

and beer are never far when in Wisconsin, and oh, do I love them for it). The must-stop shop for serious cheese eaters is **Fromagination**. Opening the door, a waft of

funky awesome stank of artisan cheeses invades the nose. Inside, all kinds of cheese accoutrements are found: jams, sauces, confited wonders, and bourbon-aged maple syrup. The expert staff is quick to help. Grab one of their sandwiches made with these divine ingredients for a little lunch treat, but save room for dinner.

**Merchant** is successfully blending local food in a chef-driven menu with dazzling craft cocktails. Famous for their Merchant burger—the beefiest burger I've ever encountered—the chef grinds their meat on site. The creamy-centered burrata is made on site from fresh-pulled mozzarella. Merchant features the very first craft cocktail bar in Madison. Managed by JR Mocanu, their bar chefs are layering flavors in all kinds of intriguing ways. Mocanu has been bartending since the tender age of 18; all he has ever wanted to do is make great drinks and he is definitely doing it.

Another can't-miss cocktail spot is the newly opened **Corral Room** hidden under the old school **Tornado Room Steakhouse**. This is the sort of joint where you're likely to

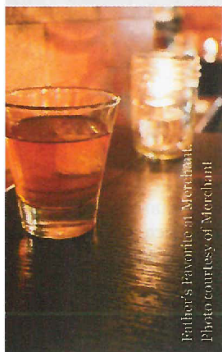
meet a Don Draper or Joan Holloway type over icy martinis. Upstairs, they serve a proper wedge salad, dripping in blue cheese beside a sizzling filet mignon. Downstairs (entrance is around the corner, in back), is like a hip party held in your grandparents' basement. The vintage record player spins 45s like the Ronettes. The walls are plastered with vintage maps and the bar stools are elegant, white, and deliciously soft.

Morning always comes too soon and, if you hit up all the cocktail spots like I did, there's nothing better than a proper greasy spoon to cure what ails you. The best in town is the fantastically affordable **Mickie's Dairy Bar**, located directly next door to HotelRED. They only take cash, so come prepared. The peppery corned beef hash and the mammoth pancakes will chase away the demons.

Before leaving Mad-town, you've got to try a little taste of **Michael's Frozen Custard**. Proudly gay-owned and full of creamy, sweet flavor, it's a perfect dessert to a decadent weekend in a town impossible not to fall head-over-heels for. ▣

#### WHERE TO GO ONLINE:

HotelRED  
[www.hotelred.com](http://www.hotelred.com)  
 Madison Museum of Contemporary Art  
[www.mmoca.org](http://www.mmoca.org)  
 Michaelangelo's Coffee House  
[www.michelangeloscoffeehouse.com](http://www.michelangeloscoffeehouse.com)  
 State Street  
[www.visitdowntownmadison.com](http://www.visitdowntownmadison.com)  
 Fromagination  
[www.fromagination.com](http://www.fromagination.com)  
 Merchant  
[www.merchantmadison.com](http://www.merchantmadison.com)  
 Corral Room and Tornado Room Steakhouse  
[www.tornadosteakhouse.com](http://www.tornadosteakhouse.com)  
 Michael's Frozen Custard  
[www.ilovemichaels.com](http://www.ilovemichaels.com)



Father's Favorite at Merchant  
Photo courtesy of Merchant



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## New Retreat: LGBTQ in Recovery

### Presenters



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counselor at  
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**Buster Ross**,  
focal therapist  
at HazelDEN  
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### LGBTQ in Recovery January 25-27, 2013

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of the LGBTQ community presents unique  
opportunities and challenges. Topics in this  
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and sexuality intersect, working with  
heterosexism in the recovery community, and  
addressing family and relationship issues.

**The Dan Anderson Renewal Center**  
Center City, Minnesota

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Sunsphere, from 1982 World's Fair, downtown Knoxville.

## KNOXVILLE'S THREE Bs: BEER, BACON AND BIKING

IT GOES by the name of Tennessee, but I'd call it the Republic of Bacon.

Consider Knoxville its Ground Zero when it comes to pork products, where lard, sausage, and country ham round out the food group. Bacon favors everything from salad dressing to ice cream, but it's at its best at breakfast.

Pete's Coffee Shop, frying bacon for 27 years, knows a thing or two about the art form. "I serve food like I want to eat it," declares its hands-on owner, as an equally seasoned server hands me a plate of bacon, eggs, grits, and biscuits lavished with thick, white, pork-fat gravy. "All raht?" she inquires as she warms the coffee of what looks like Knoxville's entire police force at the next table.

The Lunch Place (where breakfast—don't ask—is the forte) is another icon among diners, where the mayor is often spotted keeping up his strength on pork in all its glory:

Choose bacon, ham, country ham, sausage, and/or pork chops to accompany your eggs, grits and gravy, and biscuits as big as a cantaloupe. "More coffee, baby girl?" my server offers as an embellishment to the grease.

Hop on over to the Plaid Apron, where chef-on-the-rise Drew McDonald left his pre-med studies to follow his fancy for farm-to-table food: "If I was sitting down with my family, this is what I'd eat," he professes while delivering platters of Southern staples: pork belly (aka you-know-what) with roasted broccoli, soft-poached eggs, and onion gravy; cornmeal flapjacks with sorghum butter; pork sausage; lard biscuits with Benton's bacon gravy; and the flat-out creamiest grits on the planet.

Tupelo Honey is the new kid on vibrant Market Square, serving its own über-unctuous grits—here, mined with goat cheese aside fried green tomatoes and as star of its shrimp & grits specialty, which also includes

bacon from Benton's, a tiny shack in the middle of nowhere currently causing uppity New York chefs to swoon. It's also the bacon of choice of forward-cooking Amber Lloyd, chef of Knoxville's temple of fine dining, The Orangery. Amber melds it with fingerling potatoes to side her spring chicken (or feast on foie gras with duck confit. But whatever you do, don't miss her old-fashioned, mile-high coconut cake).

Bacon even salts the city's lively music scene. At the Crown & Goose (live jazz) you'll find it topping the wedge salad, paired with savory Stilton. And at the Visitors Center's deli counter, bacon (yes!) gilds my chicken sandwich as I chew in rhythm to the daily free noontime live broadcast of bluegrass on WDMX. DIY? Neighboring Moreland Music sells banjos, guitars, and fiddles, and passes along the know-how, too.

Music rules at the newly re-beautified Tennessee Theatre of 1928, restored to all



its Moorish glory. Next up: Lyle Lovett. And across the street, the Bijou—the city's oldest business building of 1813—proffers another ornate venue for local bands. (Hey, you never know: Roy Acuff, Elvis Presley, Hank Williams and Dolly Parton all got their start in Knoxville.)

Bacon, bluegrass...all we need is beer. And Knoxville's new craft industry is happy to oblige. Smoky Mountain Brewery produces a smooth Munich-style lager, the hoppier Thunder River pills, and a Harvestfest that's lower in hops but far more malty—"more complex," attests brewmaster Marty.

The specialty at Saw Works is English-style ales—"traditional beer brewed for today," says Dave, the brewer, who sends out sampler flights in the tasting room. Crown & Goose also offers an exclusive list of ales, as does Downtown Grill & Brewery. It brews onsite such specialties as the well-balanced pale ale called White Mule, a traditional Woodruff IPA, a rich and creamy New World Porter, State Street Stout, and Downtown Nut Brown Ale, wafting malt and caramel. Neighboring Suttree's High Gravity Tavern fulfills the promise of its name: high-gravity beers of European style.

To work it all off in the pleasantest fashion, add Knoxville's fourth B: biking. Or hiking. Or paddling, thanks to Knoxville's brand-new Outdoor Adventure Center sidling the Tennessee River. A one-stop shop for renting/buying equipment, Outdoor Adventure Center also hosts expeditions through a network of ten woodland city parks and 35 miles of easy to moderate trails, situated—get this!—only two miles from downtown: "a playground in the middle of the city," exults Carol Evans of Legacy Parks. We hiked amid Ijam Nature Center's 300 acres skirting the river, on up to an abandoned quarry, now a deep, still, silent pool. Or join NavCal River Rides for a narrated river tour starting at Volunteers Landing.

Who were those Volunteers? A visit to the East Tennessee Historical Society set me straight. They were the troops who upped for the War of 1812. Delving even earlier, via exhibits and narrated diaries and letters, I encountered DeSoto on his "discovery" journey here, where he demanded 30 Cherokee women as slaves. (Wisely the Cherokees simply packed up camp and left him.) Longhunters like Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett vied with the Cherokees for precious pelts. Still re-



(Clockwise from top left) Hiking trail along Tennessee River; Moreland Music; Loyal regular at Pete's; Public art, Mariat square, downtown Knoxville. Photos by Carla Waldemar

bellious, not long after the Revolutionary War, part of the state left the new U.S. government to form its own, called Franklin, which lasted four years.

Tennessee didn't secede during the Civil War, however. But it became known as the battleground of brother-against-brother, where the state's Abolitionists fought their neighbor Secessionists, leaving womenfolk to guard the farm from scurrilous raiders. More skirmishes during the Civil Rights era, as sit-ins led to riots. These days, all that folk dicker about is which band—or beer—is best.

No bloodshed to be found at the Art Museum, where Tennessee's Impressionist painters have captured the romantic Smoky Mountain views before Abstract Expressionism took over Knoxville's palettes. Marking the city's heyday as site of the 1982 World's Fair, the nearby Stratosphere soars six stories above downtown, providing a free view of the city's past, present and exciting future. For information, visit [www.Knoxville.org](http://www.Knoxville.org).

## SIDE BAR

Pridefest occurs in June, with a mega-parade down (of course) Gay Street

### Gay bars include:

Club eXile—boys' night out

Carousel II—showy nightclub

Club XYZ—voted Best of Knoxville 2012; video, karaoke, live acts, pool tables

Chrome Pony Saloon—tons of fun

Kandy—hottest, newest

The Edge—two separate areas with something for everyone



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## 1-USA

### Las Vegas:

### Scott Norton, Gay Professional Bowler, Kisses Husband Craig Woodward In ESPN Broadcast

The *Huffington Post* reports that ESPN set a new precedent over the weekend by airing what may be the first professionally-shot footage of an openly gay athlete kissing his husband after a victory. The event was held in November, although ESPN did not air the footage until Dec. 30<sup>th</sup>, when ESPN's announcers referred to Woodward as Norton's husband or spouse. Norton stated: "It is extremely important for me to come out to show other gay athletes, both current and future, that it is important to come out to show that we are just like everyone else. It's important to show people that being gay has nothing to do with one's ability to do anything as a man, least of all compete at the highest level of sports."

**Washington, DC:**

### Gay Marine Proposes To Boyfriend At White House

**Gay Marine Proposes To Join White House**  
ABC News reports that U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Matthew Phelps made history at the home of his commander in chief when the 35-year-old active-duty officer proposed to his boyfriend, Ben Schock, 26, in the Grand Foyer of the White House at the end of a holiday tour. Phelps told ABC News: "Our first date was to the White House, so I wanted to propose to him there. When I got invited to the holiday tour — six months to the day that we had been there on our first date — it was way too much of a coincidence to pass up." It is believed to be the first time two gay men have gotten engaged inside the White House, as well as a first for an active-duty member of the U.S. military.

**Maine:**

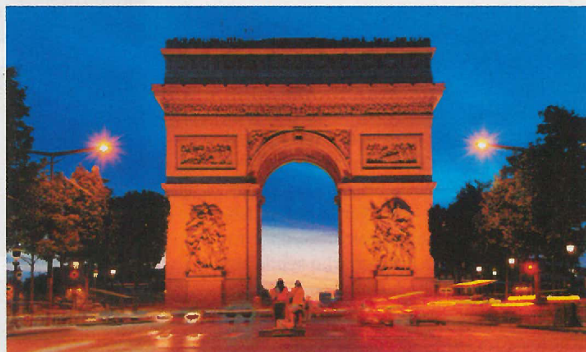
### Maine: Maine Notaries Can't Refuse To Marry Gay Couples

Queerty reports that it's rare we get good news from the National Organization for Marriage, but the anti-equality group's blog has a pleasing update about same-sex marriage in Maine: Notaries public who officiate weddings can't refuse to marry same-sex couples. According to an email from Cathy Beaudoin, who oversees the licensing of notaries for Maine's Department of the Secretary of State, if they do, they could be subject to discrimination charges under the Maine Human Rights Act.

**New York:**

**Former NY Rangers Agitator Sean Avery The Unlikely Leader In The Fight For Gay Rights In Sports**

The *New York Daily News* reports that Sean Avery figures there is one matter that hasn't been addressed at the NHL labor negotiations: gay slurs by players. Avery has been an unexpected advocate for gay rights in recent years as a board member of Athlete Ally, a group of straight athletes devoted to eradicating homophobia in sports, and has even traveled to Albany to lobby Republican state officials on gay



marriage rights. Avery has said: "Maybe it's because when I was such a bully when I had my uniform on, that when I took it off I felt the need to stand up against the bully."

### South Dakota:

### Students View Gender-Neutral Housing As Step Forward

*The Volante* reports that the Residence Hall Government Association of the University of South Dakota is considering a policy that would enact gender-neutral housing as an option in residence halls. The decision to pursue gender-neutral housing was expressed publicly at a Student Government Association meeting Nov. 13, when it was stated that currently, a transgender student would have to have a single room. According to the National Student Genderblind Campaign, some universities, such as Columbia and Ohio University, extend gender-neutral housing to LGBT students as a way to encourage safe-living conditions for these students.

## 2-UNITED KINGDOM

### Ben Cohen Proud Of Gay Icon Status

*On Top Magazine* reports that UK rugby star Ben Cohen says he's proud of his status as a gay icon. Cohen posted on his Facebook page a photo of himself donning a rainbow chef's apron with the words "Gay Icon" on Christmas Day, noting "AND PROUD OF IT" as well. Cohen, who is straight, retired from rugby in 2011 and launched the Ben Cohen Stand Up Foundation to combat homophobia and the bullying of LGBT teens, and is interested in promoting greater acceptance in the world of sports.

### 3-CAMEROON

### Cameroon Upholds 3-Year Term For Gay Text Message

The *Huffington Post* reports that an appeals court on Monday upheld a three-year sentence against a man found guilty of homosexual conduct for sending a text message to another man saying: "I'm very much in love with you." Activists said the court's ruling in Yaounde, the capital, marked yet another setback for gays and lesbians in Cameroon, widely viewed as the most repressive country in Africa when it comes to prosecuting same-sex couples. Jean Claude Roger Mbende, 32, was provisionally released on bail in July after serving a year and a half in prison, and his lawyer now has 10 days in order to file an appeal to the country's Supreme Court.

#### 4-FRANCE

#### First Baby Born In France In 2013 Has Two Mothers

*The Telegraph* reports that the first baby to be born in France in 2013 has two mothers, at a time when the country grapples with a controversial bill that would allow same-sex marriage. Only the birth mother, identified as Maude, has legal rights over the child, named Sacha, since the couple is not married – which would change if the new, “marriage for all” bill passes as expected, following parliamentary discussions beginning later this month. Maude and her partner Delphine hope to marry as soon as it becomes legally possible to do so in the country. Sacha’s birth mother had to visit a Belgian sperm bank in order to be artificially inseminated, as gay couples are not currently able to do so in France. □



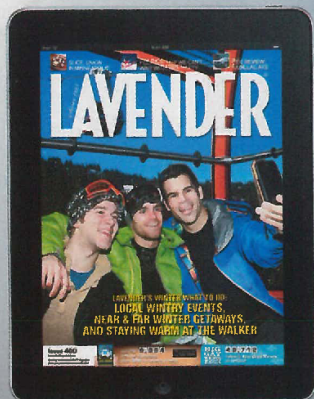
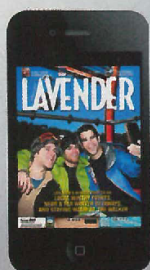
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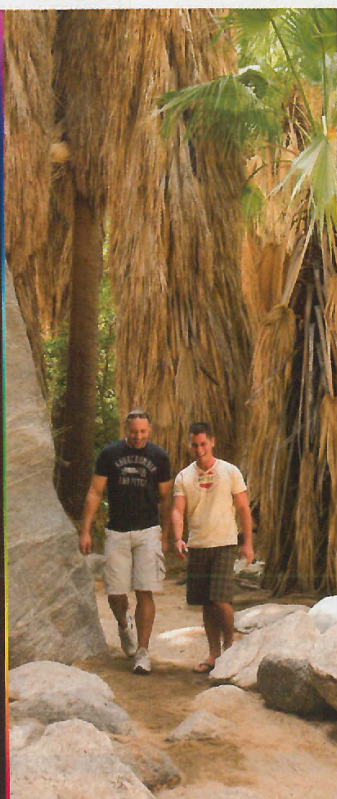


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## CADILLAC ATS

Photos by Randy Stern

THIS WAS one of the big stories of 2012.

It began with a search for a hero. For years, American automakers were looking for a hero. It would have to be one that would play on an equal field with the best vehicles on the planet.

The mission was to target this hero against the most accessible premium car of all—the BMW 3-Series.

At every turn, all three automobiles came close. The cigar was still elusive. Then, a flash of brilliance came across Detroit, specifically, from the banks of the Detroit River. What happened turned into a story that drew lines between defenders of Detroit and German automotive might.

It turned out that General Motors came up with an idea: Why not make a Cadillac to compete directly with the 3-Series?

After months of teaser videos from the Nordschleife course at the Nurburgring, the new Cadillac was unveiled at a private media event before the start of the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. While some of its competitors were making their North American debut inside Cobo Hall, the buzz about this new small Cadillac was off the scale. The buzz cen-

tered on the car's mission: To battle directly with the BMW 3-Series.

Then came Super Bowl XLVI. Cadillac presented their new car in a commercial with an audacious statement at the end. After a sequence of more racing around the track, the final line of the narrative made it clear that this new car would send its competitors back to "Green Hell," the nickname of the Nordschleife.

The new car—the Cadillac ATS—was born to battle. It was presented as the car that would take us away from our BMWs, Audis, and Mercedes-Benz. It made a strong argument against the Lexus and Infiniti as the alternative to said German contenders.

But...is it for us?

It begins with the newest interpretation of Cadillac's Art & Science design language. On a smaller frame, the ATS combines traditional Cadillac design tenets with modern angles and lines befitting of a car in its class. If you think about it, Cadillac follows a similar pattern as its competition by incorporating its key design signatures for every generation of their vehicles.

There is an edge to the ATS's overall look. There is nothing restrained about its

bold grille, the crest-and-wreath badge, illuminated door handles, vertical headlamps, and rear fin tail lamps. Amongst its competitors, the Cadillac is the most distinctive car in its class. It is unmistakably bold and aggressive.

Step inside the ATS and the theme continues throughout the cabin. There are plenty of distinctive Cadillac touches all around, considering the tasteful touches of chrome along with new textures never seen with this brand. Who would ever thought to drive a Cadillac with carbon fiber trim?

However, Cadillac has taken it a step further thanks to a very distinctive center stack. It is crowned with one of the most talked-about bits of vehicular technology this year: The Cadillac User Experience (CUE).

CUE takes the infotainment suite up a few notches. For one, you are entertained with a series of screens, including the big center screen above the center stack. Though the functionality may be familiar to anyone who uses a screen-borne infotainment system, CUE also employs both haptic feedback and pinch-touch zoom. The initial buzz over the CUE focused on how it feels like an iPad to operate. There is also voice recognition func-



tionality, which is perhaps one of the best in the business. In all, CUE is not perfect, but once you get the hang of how to use the main screen and set up all of the presets, you should be fine.

Another point about the CUE is its intuitive navigation screen. Normally, you would see a map floating around on the screen and see your position move accordingly. With CUE, there is a three-dimensional quality to its main readout screen. If you approach a downtown, it shows you images of the skyline as exactly seen from a camera, but in a CGI-like readout. Imagine driving down Marquette Avenue only to see you drive "through" the IDS Tower and Wells Fargo Center. This is true geekery in motion.

Sound from CUE is filtered to ten Bose surround sound speakers. Radio and media functions work through the screen, including SiriusXM satellite and HD Radio broadcasts. There is also Bluetooth connectivity with your phone with a real touchscreen interface on the CUE's screen.

Seating inside the cabin is quite appropriate for a sports sedan. The front seats may appear to be a bit hardcore for a Cadillac, but the enthusiast would be thoroughly entertained. Choosing the red leather seats guarantees the entertainment value – if not raising the coolness factor. There are enough adjustments to ensure a sporting seating set-up behind the wheel from thigh adjustments to a power lower lumbar bladder. These seats are designed for action, not leisure.

You might think that the ATS would feel more appropriate as a grand touring coupe than a four-door. The reason is the back seat, which may not fit the average-sized adult, let alone anyone with larger feet. The foot wells seem a bit small for a sedan.

The real story of the ATS lurks a foot or

so in front of the driver. There are three engines available for the new small Cadillac. This example has the 272-horsepower 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder under the hood, a choice amongst enthusiasts for this car. It is a very good choice indeed. There is no turbo lag, so the power is immediate from the accelerator pedal. You are entertained by a wonderful noise from the exhaust as the turbo simply goes through the gears with ease. If you do not like turbos, a 3.6-litre V6 is available with 321 horsepower on tap. For those of you who are not into performance, the standard 202-horsepower 2.5-litre engine is available on only a couple of trims.

Connected to the turbo four is a six-speed automatic transmission with all-wheel drive. The driver has plenty of options to control the shifts, including a pair of paddle shifters on the back of the steering wheel. In all, this is an absolutely superb driveline keeping the power down to all four corners of the car. The eighteen-inch alloy wheels shod with Michelin all-season Primacy MXM run-flat tires add to the package by putting down some serious grip with some moderate road noise as a drawback.

In terms of the ride/handling mix, the ATS has two choices: Touring and Sport. You always start off in touring which mixes a smooth ride, decent handling, and a somewhat loose steering feel. Touring is good if you are on the highway gobbling up long distances. The ATS does handle with minimal body roll and good feedback from the road.

If you choose Sport, you get a better handling mix. Sport eliminates body roll and tightens up steering feel both on-center and in the curves. Steering action is perfectly weighted for better control in Sport. The flip side of Sport mode is the ride where its firmness is felt through imperfect road surfaces. Warped highways are usually felt through

the cabin which normally would prompt one to switch back to Touring mode.

Between Touring and Sport is the feeling of driving one of the best Cadillacs ever. In either mode, steering is very sharp in turning radius and overall feedback. Braking is superb, which is what you expect out of a set of Brembos. The ATS is a poised machine designed for enthusiastic driving or a good ride home from a long journey.

Being a performance sedan, fuel consumption is a strong consideration when examining the ATS as a viable option. The turbocharged Premium model returned a 22.7MPG average, which is honestly what was expected.

Pricing-wise, the ATS starts off at \$33,990 with just the 2.5-litre engine and rear-wheel drive. This turbocharged, all-wheel drive Premium collection tester was at the top of the line, coming in at \$51,705. If you consider the market segment, these prices are just about right with the competition.

The Cadillac ATS is just a fantastic car. It is a dialed-up sports sedan that is positioned right at the most popular part of the luxury car spectrum. While it does various things well, if not better than its competitors, it is a hard sell. Consumers of luxury brands are loyal to the core and have already scoffed at the ATS as an upstart without pedigree.

There is another approach to the ATS. It may be new to this "compact" premium sports sedan market, but it is not exactly an alternative. The ATS is a Cadillac for the present time: designed, engineered, and executed right at the volume core of its segment. It breaks the mold by thinking globally, but acting locally. The ATS does so with a certain swagger befitting of its audacity in its marketing.

This car is a story still worth telling every year. □







## ATONS HOLIDAY FUNDRAISER

The Twin Cities leather community's collective holiday season got off to a great start at the 2012 Atons Holiday Fundraiser. The event was held Sunday afternoon and evening, Dec. 2, in the Bolt Underground.

In addition to food, drink, and a bigger-than-usual silent auction, event attendees could have their picture taken with Leather Santa and Naughty Elf (Mr. Twin Cities Leather 2011 Daniel Hennagir and Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2013 Ryan Brown). A bootblack station also was available to get those boots shined for the holidays.

The fundraiser included a food drive to replenish the food shelf at The Aliveness Project, and all funds collected at the door and through the silent auction benefited The Aliveness Project as well.

Photos by Steve Lenius.







## Waiting For Superman

IN 2010, a documentary came out about the state of inner-city public schools and the problems that plague their students. It was a film called *Waiting for Superman* and spoke to the deep issues involved in fixing some of our local schools. *New York Times* film critic Stephen Holden begins his review with this quote:

*"One of the saddest days of my life was when my mother told me 'Superman' did not exist," the educational reformer Geoffrey Canada recalls in the opening moments of 'Waiting for Superman,' a powerful and alarming documentary about America's failing public school system. "She thought I was crying because it's like Santa Claus is not real. I was crying because no one was coming with enough power to save us."*

Are we "Waiting for Superman?"

In the quest for same-sex marriage recognition, have we come to rely on some supernatural or benevolent force to give us our due? Consider this from Bill Salisbury's December 10, 2012, piece from the *Pioneer Press*, "Minnesota budget deficit the No. 1 priority for incoming legislature":

*The DFL legislative leaders hinted there may be a lot of talk but no action on legalizing same-sex marriages next session, which convenes Jan. 8. Thissen said the leaders "don't want to stop the conversation" on marriage prompted by the failed state constitutional amendment to ban gay marriages.*

*But because the U.S. Supreme Court decided to hear two cases challenging laws that define marriage as only the union of a man and a woman, he suggested lawmakers may wait until after the justices rule.*

What does the U.S. Supreme Court have to do with passage of same-sex marriage recognition in Minnesota? Well, practically nothing. Incoming DFL Speaker of the House Paul Thissen suggests this would have an impact on the debate. But would it?

Let's consider each case regarding same-sex marriage to be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. The first addresses the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is captioned "US v. Windsor" and believe it or not, it's a tax case.

From the December 7, 2012, *Christian Science Monitor*, Warren Richey wrote in

"Gay marriage reaches Supreme Court: Justices to review Prop. 8, DOMA":

*Edie Windsor and Thea Spyer spent 42 years together in New York City. They first met in 1963 and got engaged to each other in 1967 – a time when there was no recognition of same-sex marriage.*

*Ten years later in 1977, Ms. Spyer was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, a condition that eventually left her a paraplegic requiring 24-hour care.*

*In 2007, when doctors concluded that Spyer did not have much longer to live, Windsor sought to settle the couple's estate. New York State recognized the marriage as valid, but under DOMA the federal government did not.*

*Two years later, when Spyer passed away, Windsor sought to settle the couple's estate. New York State recognized the marriage as valid, but under DOMA the federal government did not.*

*That meant that Windsor would not be entitled to claim the standard marital exemption from the federal inheritance tax. Even though she and Spyer had dedicated their lives to each other and obtained a legal marriage recognized as valid by their home state, their marriage remained invalid in the eyes of the federal government.*

*Windsor was forced to pay a \$363,000 assessment. Had Spyer been a man, that assessment would have been \$0.*

The Supreme Court will decide whether or not the federal DOMA law violates the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause. They will decide whether or not these women who planned their lives together should be treated as strangers in the tax code. If the justices find DOMA is a violation of the U.S. Constitution, would that require Minnesota law to change?

Nope. It would affect federal law that doesn't recognize same-sex marriages as valid, perhaps. But it wouldn't affect Minnesota recognition of other state laws. It is certainly possible that same-sex couples could sue in federal court to obtain recognition of their marriages in Minnesota. After years of costly litigation, we could see that federal ruling trickle down to the states but it wouldn't give Minnesota same-sex marriage, merely recognition of marriages performed outside the state.

Sure, it may have an effect way down the road but that is assuming the Supreme Court rules in Windsor's favor. Furthermore, it assumes the federal judiciary also decides to alter the law throughout the states. This is possible but difficult, long, and uncertain.

The other case the Supreme Court is considering is *Hollingsworth v. Perry* and is about the California Prop 8, which made same-sex marriage illegal in that state. It, too, has to do with the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment but in a completely different way. From Bob Egelko's December 7, 2012, piece on SFGate.com, "Supreme Court to decide same-sex marriage":

*Prop. 8, approved by 52 percent of the voters in November 2008, amended the California Constitution to overturn a May 2008 ruling by the state Supreme Court that legalized same-sex marriage.*

*In February, the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Prop. 8 had withdrawn rights from a historically protected minority for no apparent reason other than moral disapproval of homosexuality – an unconstitutional act, the court said, under the Supreme Court's precedent in the 1996 Colorado case.*

In other words, states can't take away rights of people just because they don't like them.

Sounds like this case could make same-sex marriage a constitutional right, correct?

Probably not.

The U.S. Ninth Circuit's rulings have a devil of a time at the U.S. Supreme Court as indicated by Carol J. Williams in her July 18, 2011, piece in the *Los Angeles Times*, "U.S. Supreme Court again rejects most decisions by the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals": "Although the proportion of reversals was relatively in line with past years and other appellate circuits across the country, the 9th Circuit was often out of step even with the high court's liberal justices, who joined with the conservatives in 12 unanimous rulings."

Even if the Ninth Circuit ruling is accepted, their decision to throw out Prop 8 could be limited to just California and wouldn't affect any other states whatsoever. From Kenji Yoshino's December 8, 2012, post on SCOTUSblog, "Commentary on marriage grants: Different ways of splitting the difference

Continued on page 56 ➔



– the menu of options in *Hollingsworth v. Perry*: “If the Court adopted this substantive rule, the decision would only affect the capacity of same-sex couples to marry in California, at least for the time being. No other state has permitted same-sex couples to marry before taking away the right. It would, however, preclude the nine states that currently permit same-sex marriage from withdrawing that right, unless they could show a rational basis for doing so.”

The author is saying if the Supreme Court does uphold the Ninth Circuit ruling, they would probably do so with the understanding it was a right that was taken away. Other states, like Minnesota, wouldn't be in that position. We never had same-sex marriage so it hasn't been taken away. The Supreme Court also won't rule same-sex marriage is a fundamental right because of this, again from Yoshino on SCOTUSBlog: “The second premise is that the Court will wish to proceed incrementally — that it will not, in one Term, strike down DOMA and flip the forty-one states that do not currently recognize same-sex marriage. Here, too, I agree. In 1967, when the Court decided *Loving v. Virginia*, it only had to invalidate the laws of sixteen states. In general, the Court does not like to get too far in front of national consensus.”

If the Supreme Court threw out all bans on same-sex marriage, it would be invalidating amendments to the constitutions of 31 states. Even *Loving v. Virginia*, the decision throwing out laws against interracial marriage, invalidated the laws of only sixteen states. That decision didn't affect state constitutions and in some of those states it was a law that was rarely enforced.

See, it's both confusing and convoluted and I'm laying out the positive scenarios and their impact on Minnesota's same-sex marriage recognition. Instead of going through this briar patch of legal thorns and false dawns, we should just ask the DFL to do the right thing.

They could simply pass legislation allowing same-sex marriages or civil unions and be done with it. No fuss, no muss, no expensive drawn-out court challenges. But, we have to get the DFL leadership to move on this.

There is no special attachment to Batman's utility belt to help us. Wonder Woman isn't going to ride in on her invisible plane and throw the lasso of truth around our legislators. There is no Superman to fly in a save us. We must do it ourselves. We have to be our own “Superman.” As the interview with Sen. Marty informed me that this is the GLBT community's fight. Let's make them notice us. Let's make them listen. ■

## “Why We Can't Wait”- An Interview with Sen. John Marty, DFL Roseville

by Brett Stevens

On December 11th, 2012, I was fortunate enough to interview Sen. John Marty, the stalwart GLBT ally and Minnesota state senator, about the failure of the Marriage Amendment. First, I wanted to get Marty's impressions of why the amendment was defeated. I also wanted to know what effect the GLBT advocates had on the vote.

**Stevens: You have a long and respected record as a LGBT ally for same-sex relationship recognition. What are your thoughts about the Marriage Amendment's demise?**

Marty: It shows how much times have changed. I remember when the state passed the DOMA law how only a handful of votes were against it and even fewer were willing to speak against it. It is nice to see a majority of Minnesotans sharing our concerns. The hateful stuff we have faced in the past, saying it was evil and all sorts of horrendous and vicious stuff. It was so heart-warming on election night to see it going down by a solid margin, not an overwhelming one, but a solid margin. I was just ecstatic about it. I think there is a growing recognition in the public that LGBT families deserve fair treatment, too. The public is beginning to catch on. In the last fifteen, twenty years there has been huge growth in understanding the fact that we are all different. I was angry this was on the ballot, because I don't think other people's rights should be voted on. There were folks, for political purposes, who put this on the ballot and it backfired on them.

**Stevens: What role do you believe groups like Minnesota United for All Families had in the defeat of the Marriage Amendment?**

Marty: It was absolutely critical that they were out there. I remember when I first dropped in marriage equality legislation in 2008, I was talking with some of the advocacy groups that we needed to have conversations and discussions and not debates. We needed to have these conversations happen in every community in the state, in workplaces, in the local diner. We had to have the conversation to get past the fear that comes from not understanding. We talked about having

three, four years of conversations about it. Minnesotans United for All Families did a masterful job of having those conversations occur. They did a huge outreach in the faith communities and communities around the state. Every campaign uses phone banks for fundraising and getting out the vote, but they used it for persuading voters. Persuasion works. We know they had 27,000 people volunteering. By telling their stories it was so powerful.

I then asked Senator Marty if the defeating of the Marriage Amendment had a positive impact for the DFL. Marty said, “I tried to keep it [Marriage Amendment] off the ballot.” He even told Republicans he thought could be allies that this could backfire on them. In the end Marty believes the GOP lost their legislative majorities because of the Marriage Amendment. In fact, the energy generated by groups like Minnesotans United for All Families really “got out our [DFL] voters.”

Then, I asked Marty if he'd introduce a bill similar to the one he proposed in 2011, SF No. 1427 titled, “Marriage and Family Protection Act,” which makes marriage between two people instead of a man and a woman. Marty enthusiastically confirmed he would propose it again. Other states have adopted same sex-marriage and “the world didn't end.” He believes the GLBT community has “waited for too long” for this recognition. Marty said when people see same-sex couples get married they realize this doesn't negatively affect them after all. People are beginning to understand “GLBT families exist right now” and they need legal acknowledgement. Ordinary Minnesotans are waking up to that fact.

Given the current intransigence of the DFL leadership to this issue, I asked if he thought the leadership would allow a vote on his proposed bill. He bluntly said, “I don't know.” He paused. Marty said the argument against action because “Minnesotans aren't ready for same-sex marriage” is something he “doesn't buy.” He thinks the “27,000 people who fought it [Marriage Amendment] should speak out.”

I asked him about repealing the state ➡



DOMA law. He said, "I don't think we have to get to that." Marty believes repealing the state DOMA is a half-measure. Full same-sex marriage recognition should be the goal. He said, "Martin Luther King wrote a book called *Why We Can't Wait*, and in it he [King] makes the argument 300 years was too long to wait to demand equality." Marty recalls the energy and excitement of so many young people fighting against the Marriage Amendment. He seemed to believe this passion will be squandered if the DFL doesn't do the right thing. "The DFL will be in trouble in 2014 if they don't do this," he said. "These young people will become disenchanted."

He also recalled when the Human Rights Amendment passed and there were many people, including Republicans, who did the right thing even though it was deeply unpopular. Marty said, "but people did what was right. They didn't stick their finger in the wind," to find out what was politically expedient. In the end, its passage was the just the right thing to do. He wishes more of that was out there today.

Finally, I asked Marty what the next step should be for the GLBT community. He paused, took a breath, and said, "Minnesotans United for All Families has to claim victory. We won. Make it simple and do it now." Upon reflection, I think Marty was saying the GLBT community shouldn't be second guessing itself. This was an enormous victory that stopped the Marriage Amendment and it was defeated by a significant margin. We shouldn't accept the premise that this was just a rejection of the amendment but was a positive win for same-sex marriage acceptance by the community at large.

Marty said it wouldn't take long to pass such legislation. The Minnesota legislature could act rather quickly since there are already legislative findings in Marty's bill. He said, "It would take maybe an hour, hour and a half at a committee hearing in the House, and the same [amount of time] in the Senate. Maybe it would take a week on the floor and it would pass." Marty believes the process could be brief. There is no reason for waiting. As far as timing, Marty states, "Maybe we couldn't do it [pass same-sex marriage] in January, but we could in February or May." With conviction, Marty said, "There is no excuse for not getting this done."

He did say this would require action by the GLBT community. "The community needs to be as vocal for the next couple of months as they were for the last few months." If this legislation is to be consid-

ered, it will require the GLBT community to say they want it. After such a victory at the ballot box, there is no reason to wait.

This brings me to the sentiments evoked by Marty in citing Martin Luther King's book *Why We Can't Wait*. King wrote this book about why African Americans needed to achieve racial and social equality right then, in 1964. He believed, as Marty says, they had waited long enough. So have we. To achieve such goals King observed this about the Civil Rights movement, from page 132 of his book:

*It was the people who moved their leaders, not the leaders who moved the people. Of course, there were generals, as there must be in every army. But the command post was in the bursting hearts of millions of Negroes. When such a people begin to move, they create their own theories, shape their own destinies, and choose the leaders who share their own philosophy. A leader who understands this kind of mandate knows that he must be sensitive to the anger, the impatience, the frustration, the resolution that have been loosed in his people. Any leader who tries to bottle up these emotions is sure to be blown asunder in the ensuing explosion.*

Upon reflection, Marty's words to us were about this very thing. I think Marty wants us to know we must fight for same-sex marriage recognition. If our leadership isn't willing to do what is right, it is our responsibility to let them know. Emotions are running high following the rejection of the Marriage Amendment but doing nothing is no longer an option. As King's words remind us, these leaders who ignore us will be "blown asunder in the ensuing explosion." Let the DFL leadership know the fire is in our belly, and in our hearts. □

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## OutFront Minnesota, Project 515, and Minnesotans United for All Families Comment on Repealing DOMA

Lavender posed the following question, separately, to OutFront Minnesota, Project 515, and Minnesotans United for All Families. They chose to respond together, rather than separately. Read their answer here.

**Lavender: Since the Governor, the Minnesota Senate, and the House DFL leadership have stated that they merely intend to continue the conversation without seizing the momentum of the Marriage Amendment victory, to what extent do you trust our legislature to repeal the 1997 Minnesota Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), and to advance marriage equality by the end of this legislative session in May 2013?**

This November, Minnesotans made history by becoming the first state in American history where voters said NO to using our state constitution to permanently limit the freedom of gay and lesbian couples to marry.

Here in Minnesota, committed gay and lesbian couples are still unable to marry under state law. Freedom means freedom for everyone, and we are committed to achieving the freedom to marry for all loving and committed couples in the state.

The opportunity before us is to complete the conversation that we started so robustly and positively with the VOTE NO campaign. We will work with the Minnesota Legislature to change our current laws to ensure that all loving and committed couples have the freedom to make that life-long commitment to each other through marriage.

Now is the time to create a campaign that says, at long last, YES to marriage for loving, committed same-sex couples.

United Together,  
Richard Carlbon, Minnesotans United  
Monica Meyer, OutFront Minnesota  
Ann Kaner-Roth, Project 515

**Note: Please note that all respondents failed to answer the precise question put to them. □**





## A Radical Idea

WELL, MINNESOTA, it's January.

That means the start of a new session of the Minnesota Legislature. Fair-minded and smart people control the House and Senate, not to mention that one such person also serves as our governor. We're barely two months from defeating the anti-marriage amendment. The huge organizational apparatus which made that possible is still in relative existence.

In short, we're in the right place for a call to arms. You know what I'm talking about: it's time for gay marriage in our fair state. Let's get a bill introduced, debated, and then voted on. We already know that the majority of Minnesotans support the idea of allowing two people who love each other to marry, regardless of their gender.

Give me a reason not to go forward. I dare you.

Wait. I have one more idea and this one's far more radical: the new "Marriage for All" law should require that people applying for marriage licenses—gay and straight—first complete a non-religious marriage preparation course.

I can already hear the collective "Huh?"

Hear me out, please.

Everyone knows that close to half of all marriages end in divorce. Yet, no one seems to do anything about this abysmal success rate. It doesn't take an advanced degree to understand that not every couple is well-suited to marriage. What if engaged couples received pre-marriage education about the

realities of living with someone for the rest of one's life? Almost everything has pros and cons associated with it; why should marriage be anything different? Would the added perspective of trained group leaders (optimally one or more married couples) be helpful to an engaged couple?

You bet it would. It's always good to know what to expect before getting yourself into any long term situation. That's doubly true for marriage, which in theory is a one way ticket.

I'm not speaking in a vacuum. As some readers know, when I lived as a man, I was married to a woman, my high school sweetheart actually, for twenty-two years. While we had some clue about what we were getting ourselves into, marriage proved to be far more formidable than either of us expected. Having the benefit of someone else's nuanced perspective would have helped greatly.

I believed in the idea of pre-marriage preparation so much that my ex-wife and I conducted prep courses through our church. For much of our marriage, we spent four or five Saturday nights a year talking to groups of couples about the pluses and minuses of marriage. Our sessions didn't involve religion; just practical advice.

We started every session with the question, "Tell us what you think will be the one best thing about being married, and the one worst thing."

Invariably, the "best" would be "marrying my best friend." Equally invariably, there were two "worsts": "picking up his socks"

and "not being able to hunt as often as I'd like." I'm not kidding; these were the kinds of negatives we heard from nearly 1000 engaged couples over fifteen years.

One would think that people about to step into the life-changing act of marriage would give the downsides a bit more thought.

My ex and I would always press "the Five C's" of making a good decision on marriage: *character* (does your fiancé act with moral and personal integrity?); *communication* (how do the two of you talk? Do you "fight fair," making sure each has their say?); *change* (how do handle change?; neither of you will be the same people in twenty years); *commitment* (do both of you follow through on promises and oaths?) and the big one, *courage* (is your gut telling you this might not be right? Are you brave enough to say, "Wait; this commitment isn't for me?").

Certainly, I'm no expert on marriage: I married even though there was something inside me that questioned my true identity. Still, we passed the Five C's; our marriage didn't fall apart because we weren't right for each other.

One more point: even if you disagree with my idea about a marriage preparation requirement, you've got to admit that it will make it the objectors (e.g. those "Vote Yes" people) stop and think. If they're so intent on protecting marriage for straight people, then make sure the straights are truly ready to marry.

It's guaranteed to confuse the hell out of them. □



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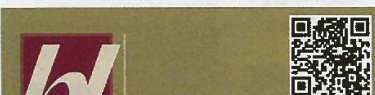


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## Gone, But Still In Me

IN JUNE, my mom was diagnosed with cancer and she died two months later. She was staring into my eyes as she died and I felt her soul flow into my body.

"Dad, I think mom is inside of me," I said the following day.

"Yes, she'll always be with you," he said.

"No, I mean that literally. She crawled inside of me and is using my body as a command post," I said.

He looked at me skeptically for a moment, and then said, "Well, you did criticize what I was wearing this morning, which isn't like you...."

"And I feel an overwhelming desire to vacuum, tell my brother how to raise his children, and deadhead the garden...." I said, with growing alarm.

"There's no other explanation," he said. "She's taken you over."

My mother controlled my life for the past 47 years. While death might cause lesser forces of nature to lose their power, it's only strengthened my mom's awesome command.

My mom wasn't scared to die, but she was not happy about it. Mainly, I suspect, because—as the ultimate control freak—she feared the mess her family and friends would make of their lives without her constant advice and bullying.

Even on her deathbed, she was planning our future. She told me what food to serve at her memorial service ("lovely finger sandwiches and lots of champagne"), drafted a punchlist for my contractor to complete on my kitchen remodel, and made me promise to manage my father's social life.

The widows smelled blood in the water the day my mom was admitted to the hospital, and they began bombarding my dad with casseroles and concern. My mother watched the action with amusement from her sickbed and offered a running narration of the widow offensives like a sportscaster doing color commentary. "Get out a pen and paper," she said, "we're going to make a list of the women you should let

your dad date, and the ones who are only attracted to his money and the fact that he can still drive at night."

In the final days, I felt that she finally was serene in the knowledge that she had turned over stewardship to me. She presented me with an epic list of "final requests"—everything from promising to "give up your stupid ideas about not eating pork" to making sure my nieces attend good colleges.

But, then, a day before she died, she changed her mind about my competence. "I can't die," she said. "You don't even have enough sense to wait until after Christmas to buy a winter coat...when they're on sale! You've never learned the importance of separating delicates. You just throw them in the wash with your cottons and hope for the best. And your hair is an absolute mess."

"Mom, I'm ready to take over," I said with as much confidence as I could muster. But she knew as well as I did that I was faking it.

So, the next day, as I held her hand and she took her last breath, I wasn't surprised when she locked eyes with me and I felt a passage open that allowed her soul to travel deep into me.

Yesterday, as I tried to help my dad recreate the holiday decor my mother had expertly orchestrated for the past 50 years, he pulled out an intricate garland from Denmark.

"I can't remember where that goes," I said.

"Let's ask your mother," my dad said. So I closed my eyes and a voice I recognized immediately for its supreme authority and self-assurance blasted through the noise in my brain.

"Hang it on the chandelier in the dining room—the same place it's been for the past two decades, you fools," I channeled.

And with a familiar sigh of annoyance and relief, we did exactly what she told us to do. □



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## Lesbian Breakups and Baby Boomer Bars

### Dear Ms. Behavior:

Why do lesbians break up so easily? I believe in staying with the one you love. But I knew someone who dumped her lover for forgetting to put the CDs back in the CD rack. OK, her lover traded the CDs for heroin. So? Everyone makes mistakes.

Another queer I know kicked her girlfriend out after she smoked one cigarette in bed. What about a little forgiveness?

So many lesbians I know have been involved in six, seven, eight "long term" relationships, each of which was supposed to last forever. Any of them could have, given a decent chance. I know you must have lots of theories on this, Ms. B. Maybe it's because women "fall in love" too easily?

—FOREVER GIRL

### Dear Forever Girl:

Love and sex are drugs in a physiological sense, but like any good addictive substance, they lose their ability to intoxicate over time. Once the novelty wears off, the dopamine surges wane, which means that your girlfriend's seductive kisses no longer make up for her being 45 minutes late or for leaving her shoes where you'll trip on them. You'll also start to notice if she isn't as attentive as she used to be. At about the two-year mark, unless there's enough basic compatibility to sustain you both, the concept of a trade-in may begin to feel appealing.

Of course, sometimes leaving is the right

way to go; some women can't be trained out of bad habits. They have sex with their exes in your nuptial bed, or shoot heroin in front of your mother, or leave food-encrusted dishes on your linen sheets, and won't stop.

But in the absence of such serious betrayal, if the average lesbian trades her girlfriend in for a new one, she'll only feel drunk on love and sex for another six months or year. Then, the same icky problems creep in.

Everyone needs to decide how many times to go through it before staying to do the work and potentially achieving a whole other glorious level of love.

### Dear Ms. Behavior:

The past four times I've gone to bars in my hometown, someone in my group has requested that the DJ play a slow song. Each time we've been told that it will be played a little later. I am still waiting.

Being a "baby boomer," I cannot appreciate the loud, new music. I would enjoy a bar where my friends and I could dance to hits from the '50s-'80s at a volume where conversation would be possible. I'm glad the bars have finally added bottled water to the beverage list; I would also like to see the addition of appetizers (if nothing more than chips and pickles).

Has anyone tried opening the bars from 7–9 p.m. on Saturdays and playing '50s-'80s music for us aging baby boomers? 10 p.m. is my bedtime. But I'd go every week from 7–9 p.m. if country or soft rock were played.

These earlier hours would reach out to us older gay people and improve the profits for the bar owners. Or maybe bars might open occasionally on Sunday afternoons for us aging baby boomers. We may be graying, but we do have money to spend. Bar owners are you listening? Can you at least give us a chance to jingle your cash registers?

—P.J.

### Dear P.J.:

Bars like to draw a younger crowd. The 20- to 30-year-olds are the people most likely to go out, rather than hunkering down under a quilt with a snack, a movie, and a significant other.

Of course you could always try sending a note to a bunch of bar owners and see if anyone addresses your concerns. Meanwhile, Ms. Behavior's response to your question took the form of a sexual fantasy of sorts:

You are lying on Ms. Behavior's bed, holding a clipboard, giving orders. You say, "Move to this end of the bed. No, put your feet here. Why haven't you provided snacks? You should make more money! I want your hair falling over the left side of your face. Hurry up, it's almost my bedtime. Slower, don't, that tickles. Please change the radio station. Stop drinking juice in bed. No, I have to be on top."

Ms. Behavior emerges from her fantasy in a sweat, and wonders if she should suggest that you work on your control issues. □

TROLÍN, UN DIABLITO ROSA



I am so... so sad.  
Trolón no longer cares about me.  
Je suis si triste.  
Trolón ne s'occupe plus de moi.



Since he got new job, he no longer focuses me.  
Depuis qu'il a décroché un nouvel emploi, je n'ai plus son attention.



What is his job now?  
Que fait-il?



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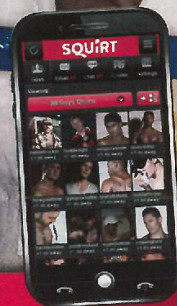
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# Monster

A MAN wearing a surgical mask moves anxiously through a maze of fluorescent lighting and packaged food. He maneuvers quickly and methodically—no time for browsing, for meandering, for thinking. He knows this supermarket. He knows at this hour business will be slow, and he'll have to interact with only a cashier before escaping back to the safety of his hiding place: Home.

He ticks through his grocery list without encountering other shoppers, and moves up the last aisle toward the registers to check out. Homestretch. He comes to the front of the store and loses his breath: a few customers wait in the only open queue. His heart beats faster. He's flush with embarrassment. And he hesitates. He'll hide somewhere until the other customers leave, and then he'll check out, he resolves. He hurriedly dips back into the frozen aisle and tries to catch his breath.

"Can I help you, son?" interrupts a voice from behind.

He turns to see a security guard with a hand on his pistol. The guard looks nervous himself—seeing a man run around a grocery store in a surgical mask at this hour is, well, unusual.

He has a secret under his mask, one he doesn't want to reveal to any stranger, let alone a supermarket security guard. But he'll have to explain.

Meet Richard Lee Norris.

Richard lives in Hillsville, Virginia. He's performed the preceding routine for about 15 years. One assumes it gets easier with time, but not for Richard. He remains reclusive, making most trips outside his home during hours of the day when others won't see him.

If they see him, they'll stare. They'll laugh. They'll cringe. That's because Richard has no face. He lost it in a gun accident in 1997.

Richard lives his life as a real-life monster, living in the shadows, on the edge of society—a terrifying, shocking sight if ever there were one.

And this was Richard's life—a subject for whispers, double-takes, cruel comments, terrified passersby, pity, fascination—until he underwent a successful face transplant at the University of Maryland nine months ago, the most comprehensive in history. The procedure replaced his jaws, tongue, skin, and underlying nerve tissue, said an October press release from the University.

"I have been undergoing physical therapy and also speech therapy," Norris said in the release. "I have been doing very well regaining my speech back. Each day it improves a little more."

"People used to stare at me because of my disfigurement. Now they can stare at me in amazement and in the transformation I have taken. I am now able to walk past people and no one gives me a second look."

Out of context, the statement is brow-raising. That someone would be proud for being plain? Proud that his looks don't warrant a second look? This is the story of a man who, by any childhood definition, once fit the profile of a monster. His was the face that kids see under their beds and in their nightmares—a face that warranted unwanted attention from the curious, the mean-spirited, the sympathetic: unnerving spotlights, shining as harshly as the fluorescent lights of a grocery store.

It's impossible for you and me to imagine what it's like being such a monster. How would it be to live life hideously and under such a label? It's impossible to imagine what it's like to feel so ugly, so unfit for society, that the life of a recluse is what we'd deem superior to suffering the attention from others.

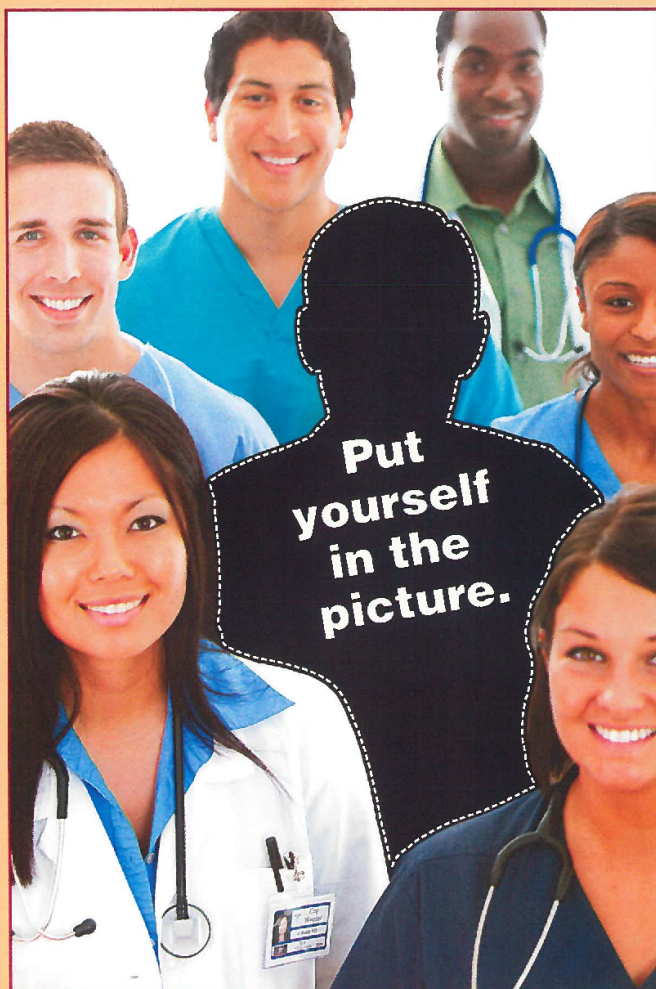
But rethink the impossible. The real monsters here do not include Richard in their ranks. The real monsters of the world are those of us who push people like Richard into hiding, whether we intend to or not. We—those so blatantly fascinated and disgusted by the physical perils of others—we are the perpetrators.

The monsters of our youth never went away. They didn't disappear when we grew up. We became them.

Supermarket encounter dramatized. Read more about Richard's story at UMM.edu/news. □



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